

BLOODLINES

A THESIS IN

Theatre

Presented to the Faculty of the University of
Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

by

MARGARET A. SHELBY

B.F.A., Kansas City Art Institute, 1996

Kansas City, Missouri

2015

BLOODLINES

A FULL LENGTH PLAY

Margaret A. Shelby, Candidate for the Master of Arts Degree

University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2015

ABSTRACT

A drama in two acts, Bloodlines centers upon a traditional farm family in Iowa, several years in the future. The climate has changed, and though they struggle to maintain the centuries-old family home and traditions associated with rural life, a recent tragedy and the complications of their altered world wear at them. Storms, dry wells, and threats from the local water municipality pressure the family. When the daughter of the household stumbles upon unknown wildlife, she soon discovers mysteries and secrets that just might be the thing that can save the family farm, but at what cost?

A look at conventional values in an increasingly unconventional world, Bloodlines examines ideas about identity, sustainability, eternity, and faith.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have examined a thesis titled “Bloodlines”, presented by Margaret A. Shelby, candidate for the Master of Arts Degree, and verify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Supervisory Committee

Felicia Hardison Londre, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Department of Theatre

Frank Higgins, M. A.

Department of Theatre

Robert Scott Stackhouse, M.F.A.

Department of Theatre

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
PREFACE	vii
CAST INFORMATION	xx
TEXT OF <i>BLOODLINES</i>	1
WORKS CITED	101
VITA	103

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. <i>Evolution of the Horse</i>	xiii
2. <i>Tree of Life</i>	xvii
3. <i>The Great Chain of Being</i>	xviii

PREFACE

The play Bloodlines, originally titled Vestiges, had its beginning as a writing assignment in a graduate-level playwriting class. The setting for the nascent play was a single location, that of a genetics laboratory. The original version had only two characters, both of whom were mature scientists, but that iteration evolved (as life must) into the play submitted here. Aspirations for this play include submitting the text to regional festivals and competitions and plans to mount a production as part of the 2016 Kansas City Fringe Festival. In contemporary drama, there are many paths of creativity open to the playwright. Authors such as Sarah Ruhl create worlds where rain falls inside elevators, and magical trees can be carried by one man to heal his dying lover. War Horse can charge across the stage, literally carrying soldiers into battle and putting the entire brutal reality of World War I within an astonished audience's reach. With sufficient motivation and imagination, anything is possible on stage. This is the world to which this writer aspires.

Theatre has functioned as a change agent since its infancy. Whether a cautionary tale against the unbridled hubris of man as in Aristotle's Oedipus Rex, lamentation for the members of society in unescapable poverty as in The Lower Depths by Gorky, or even a seemingly lighthearted romp such as Beaumarchais' The Marriage of Figaro wherein a servant from the bottom rungs of his culture's social order proves himself to be his superior's better, can inspire individuals and societies to change viewpoints, attitudes,

behavior, and eventually laws. The pressing need for change in how we see ourselves in relation to the natural world was in part what motivated the creation of this drama.

Among the generation popularly called “Millennials,” issues of continuance and sustainability of life on earth as we know it rank high among their concerns. It has been said that this is, in fact, this generation’s “Nuclear bomb” in reference to the surge of films and books about radiation poisoning or other End-Of-The-World scenarios popular in the post Hiroshima/Nagasaki 1950s and 1960s. Such concerns are not without merit. Compelling research published in the past few years offers calculations and extrapolations on global sustainability that are eye opening. Among the voices offering such facts is Anthony D. Barnosky. In his 2014 book *Dodging Extinction* he writes:

...the only reason we humans can exist in such high numbers — numbers that are far above Earth’s normal carrying capacity for big land animals — is that we add a huge amount of energy to the global ecosystem, mostly through the extraction of fossil fuels. Without that extra energy, a lot of people will have to die, and the high quality of life that billions of people now enjoy and billions more aspire to would evaporate.¹

When your children seem justified in worrying that there really won’t be much of a tomorrow, and popular culture is full of zombies, vampires, and other forms of wandering non-life, the fear is hard to ignore. The play *Bloodlines* strives to suggest an alternative to the worn-out “humans will triumph by domination” scenario that permeates so much

1. Anthony D. Barnosky, *Dodging Extinction* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), 59 - 60.

contemporary culture. Thornton Wilder, in his landmark work Our Town, states that there is something eternal about mankind.² He goes on to support this claim by pointing out that the greatest minds in human history have been saying so for thousands of years. While this packs quite an emotional appeal, it hardly serves as solid evidence for the statement. And yet, as our technology allows us to study life at its most basic code, experts do find evidence of the presence of the very materials needed to create DNA, that famous code of life. Detected in far flung galaxies and observed in interplanetary debris that has fallen to earth have been amino acids, molecules necessary for the creation of proteins which can lead to life.³ So perhaps Mr. Wilder was correct about the eternal in a way he could not have foreseen. Bloodlines posits that which is eternal might be something none of us expect and not the province of humankind alone.

The idea of altering life's code has seen light in literature and art before. The highest-profile example in American culture is arguably the work of Michael Crichton. His novels about the science and ramifications of cloned dinosaurs captured the imagination of millions and continue to prove inspirational. There are many paleontologists and geneticists in the field today who will tell you they are there because of Jurassic Park.⁴ No doubt a good number in the arts are similarly inspired and Bloodlines acknowledges that influence, but strives to dial back the spectacle and take the

2. Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*, (Coward-McCann, 1965) 87-88.

3. Jeffery L. Bada, et al., "A Search for Endogenous Amino Acids in Martian Meteorite ALH84001, *Science* 16 January 1998: Vol. 279 no. 5349, 362-365.

4. Matthew Jenkin, "Working With Dinosaurs: the secret life of a paleontologist". *The Guardian*, (April 22, 2014): accessed March, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/careers/dream-job-working-dinosaurs-paleontologist>.

story to a smaller, quieter scale. The results of tinkering with the eternal genetic code are explored as they alter life, yes, but not just the biological life of the animals whose genetic makeup is manipulated. The lives of an average American farm family are also reshaped as they grapple with environmental, legal, societal, and personal changes. The family must confront various thresholds during the course of the events of the play through which they must pass (or not pass) sometimes with ease, sometimes with great difficulty. The use of thresholds in the play serves as transforming devices, allowing some characters easy access while trapping others. When a character moves from one location to another, from one state of being to another, or from one identity to another we see them crossing thresholds. Their environment, once nurturing, slips away and is replaced with heat, drought and rolling electrical storms. Life-giving rain is elusive, replaced by painful hail stones. Lightning splits out of a clear sky and eventually the characters must decide whether they will cross from one identity to a new and unknown one, or whether that threshold is a place over which they cannot step.

Chief among those thresholds for the characters is the one that leads to a sense of self, the family farm. Both inside the world of the play and outside, there are and have been enormous pressures on what is affectionately called The American Dream. The keystone to this dream has long been idealized notions of independence and self determination which finds their most beloved manifestation in land and home ownership. This has informed much of what it is to identify as an American and an individual. It has manifested itself in such cherished and diverse characters as Gerald O' Hara and his

admonishments about Tara to his daughter Scarlett in *Gone With the Wind*⁵, and Lena Younger’s anthem to a man’s own floors in *A Raisin in The Sun*⁶. Moreover it is culturally desirable that this ownership be maintained and passed down to subsequent generations — preferably male, historically speaking. After all, the traditional family business model has long been “Johnson and Sons” not “Johnson and Daughters”. The very fact that the word “son” is attached to the family name is evidence that a male offspring was highly valued. As these traditions impact contemporary American rural communities and the family farm, it is particularly noted that male ownership of the land continues to dominate.⁷ In fact, many of the activities associated with traditional agricultural work do favor the male physique. Upper body strength is required for loading and unloading heavy sacks of grain, the baling and throwing of hay, lifting and holding up equipment, etc. Longer legs really do afford better coverage of terrain in less time, and a certain bravado that comes with heightened testosterone levels all factor favorably for men when manual labor and livestock management are the order of business. This bedrock of cultural identity, that it takes a man to run a place, has resisted change, though pressures exist to challenge this tradition. In that resistance we also might glimpse established hierarchies that can trace their origins back hundreds or even thousands of

5. Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With The Wind* (Simon & Schuster, 2008), 49.

6. Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (Random House, 2001), 92.

7. Luke Runyon, “Women’s Work is Never Done On The Farm, And Sometimes Never Counted,” *The Salt, National Public Radio blog*, December 11, 2014, accessed February 16, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2014/12/11/369902748/womens-work-is-never-done-on-the-farm-and-sometimes-never-counted>.

years and help sustain a conviction that the way things are is the way they have always been, and this way is the way they should remain.

Bloodlines confronts the way “things” are and suggests such traditional hierarchies are actually vulnerable and precarious, often incorrectly calculated,⁸ and ultimately unhelpful. New revelations from the rapidly advancing genetic sciences have begun to reveal humans as not so distant from the flora and fauna we farm as was once thought, at least at the level of the code of life. When experts in the field of genetics at University of California-Davis succeeded in sequencing the gene *Equus Caballus* (the horse) in 2009, they were surprised to find 53% of equine chromosomes show a common sequencing with human chromosomes, an occurrence known as conserved synteny.⁹ Remarkably, this synteny is the most closely numbered sequence, animal to human, yet found. These are times, certainly, when science challenges humankind’s presumed eternal seat near the top of the ladder of existence by suggesting to us that our physical being is quite similar to other species, and further, that our continuance is by no means especially sanctioned or guaranteed by God or anyone else, let alone our dominance. When such facts threaten certain revered ways of life, it is not all that surprising to see members of society retreat to “safe” territory and claim social, philosophical, and sometimes actual

8. Runyon, “Women’s Work Is Never Done On The Farm, And Sometimes Never Counted”.

9. C.M. Wade, et al., “Genome Sequence, Comparative Analysis, and Population Genetics of the Domestic Horse”. *Science*, (November 6, 2009): 865-867, accessed March 22, 2015, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19892987>.

terrain that is familiar, known and — at least in the short run — defensible.¹⁰

Increasingly “because the Bible tells me so” is the answer to everything and any questioning of that as unalterable truth can get you swiftly voted off the raft in many communities. The “rugged individual” of the American Dream had better not run counter to certain conservative beliefs, or there is likely to be trouble. Our protagonist in Bloodlines finds herself at odds with her community and family while she fights for an individual identity, the very psychological mindset of individualism that is celebrated by her conservative culture.

The use of the horse character in Bloodlines is symbolic on two fronts. First, the horse is an icon of evolution. Charles Darwin’s writings and musings on evolutionary theory involve in part his study of fossilized equid bones. The horse went on to become the literal poster child for evolution (see figure 1). Illustrated charts and posters of horse evolution could be found all over American classrooms. These fact sheets were busy with images and graphics depicting the horse transitioning from the strange little Eohippus through multiple versions until it arrives at the top of the chart as the sturdy

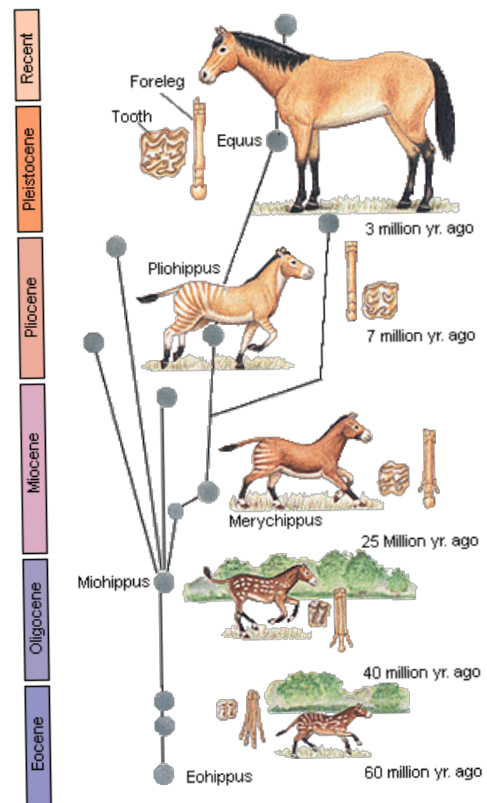


Figure1. *The Evolution of the Horse*

10. Kevin Jenkins, “Bundy: Showdown with feds a spiritual battle,” *The Spectrum*, (August 12, 2014), accessed March 22, 2015, <http://www.thespectrum.com/story/news/local/2014/08/02/bundy-showdown-feds-spiritual-battle/13536097/>.

companion that is the modern horse. Horses became very closely associated with evolution for at least three generations of Americans. The second reason the horse is used as the vessel for continuance in Bloodlines is the horse has long been man's ticket to advancement and improvement. Every culture that got its hands on a horse eventually figured out how useful the animal could be, and stopped (or at least limited) the eating of them. To be sure, horse meat still provides protein for some communities, but historically in the developed world the horse is valued more for its speed, strength, trainability, and courage than for its flavor in a stew. Harnessing of the horse advanced human agriculture, communication, transportation, trade, and warfare. Civilization rose on the back of a horse as armies marched, settlers settled, and the mail got through. Recent developments in cloning give us a new horse, once again civilization's ride forward to new frontiers, though not in a way one might expect.

In July of 2012 the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI), based in Switzerland, ruled in favor of allowing cloned horses and any subsequent offspring to be admitted to international competitions.¹¹ This controversial decision paved the way for what was once an impossibility; major championship horses in the high-stake and high-dollar world of international and Olympic competitions could now produce progeny. Why could they not do so before? Most of the horses in the blue ribbon, silver cup circle in sport-horse disciplines are geldings, male horses who have been castrated. Geldings are,

11. Kastalia Medrano, "Cloned Horses Coming to the Olympics?," *NationalGeographic.com*, (August 05, 2012), accessed March 22, 2015, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/08/120808-cloned-horses-clones-science-london-olympics-2012-equestrian/>.

on the whole, more consistent performers than mares and much more manageable than stallions. So for generations the majority of champions taking victory laps in the elite world of international dressage, show jumping, and eventing could not make babies. Until now. The notion of cloning an animal has been familiar to the general public since Dolly the sheep was successfully created in 1996 by the Roslin Institute at the University of Edinburgh. Dolly was a breakthrough to be sure, and paved the way for a wide variety of cloning efforts, including pigs, bulls, goats, mice, and horses. Horses in particular offer a compelling reason for successful cloning technology. The foal of a worldwide champion can sell for tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars. Owners of famous geldings, once shut off from the lucrative market of champion foals, can now compete. Moreover, competitive athletes of every species can succumb to career-ending injuries and horses are no exception. What should one do with that promising Olympic level favorite who can never be sound (fit to ride) again due to a sport-related trauma, but is still healthy enough to live? In order to recoup investments, owners have turned to breeding the star athlete, often seen as a good way to make maintaining the animal worthwhile. Sadly, if that champ had been gelded, it was a loss. Cloning changes that. The international market for sport horses from prestigious bloodlines just got happier.

Research for the play Bloodlines revealed one truly surprising fact. Though intended to be a totally fictionalized premise, it turns out that human/animal hybridization has actually been happening for decades. Dr. Esmail D. Zanjani is a strong proponent of this research and runs the biomedical department of the University of Nevada at Reno.

There he has conducted experiments involving sheep/human “chimera”. In a paper accepted by a leading Science publisher, he writes:

Thus, information from xenogeneic models of human hematopoiesis and specifically, the human/sheep model of in utero transplantation, may provide valuable insights into human hematopoietic transplantation biology.¹²

There has been, as one might expect, quite an outcry around this research and quite a few breathless news pieces associated with the facility¹³. Funding seems to have dried up for the lab and British, Canadian, and American bans have been put into place on any further hybrid or chimera research. Yet scientists are working around these bans and organizations devoted to pursuing stem cell and genetic developments are working hard at normalizing the research in an effort to defend and maintain it.¹⁴

Scientific inquiry is so often assaulted. What was once part of the basic science education of every school child in America, evolution, became and remains a flash point for debate. The man most closely identified with evolutionary theory, Charles Darwin, did not argue from a point of certitude but rather questioning, as a good scientist would.

He famously scribbled the words “I think” (see figure 2) in his field notes as he

12. Esmail D. Zanjani, et al., “Homing of Human Cells in the Fetal Sheep Model: Modulation by Antibodies Activating or Inhibiting Very Late Activation Antigen-4–Dependent Function”, *Blood*: 94 (October 1, 1999), accessed March 22, 2015, <http://www.bloodjournal.org/content/94/7/2515?sso-checked=true>.

13. Claudia Joseph, “Now Scientists Create Sheep That’s 15 % Human”, *The Daily Mail* (March 27, 2007), accessed March 22, 2015, <http://www.mailonsunday.co.uk/news/article-444436/Now-scientists-create-sheep-thats-15-human.html>.

14. Ian Murnaghan, “Stem Cell and Cybrid Controversy.” *Explore Stem Cells* (August 27, 2012), accessed March 22, 2015, <http://www.explorestemcells.co.uk/stem-cell-cybrid-controversy.html>.

speculated about adaptation and survival of species.¹⁵ His work, which was steeped in theory, was used successfully as catalyst for the drama Inherit The Wind by Jerome

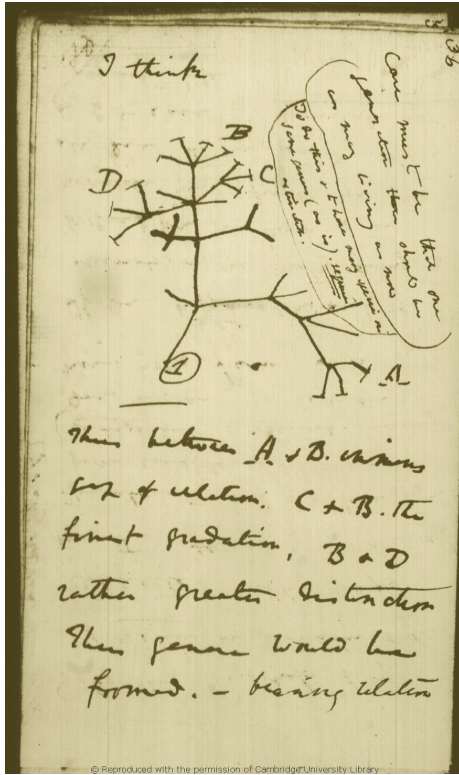


Figure 2. *Tree of Life*

Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee. The teaching in schools of evolutionary theory still contributes to an alarming situation, one in which all of science education is on the defensive. The climate for science education has gotten so bad that in 2005 a congressional panel felt compelled to intervene. The panel wrote extensively again in 2010 on the pressing need for science education in American schools and the impact on the nation's future should this need be thwarted.¹⁶ Why does science and experimentation

antagonize people so? Science is always in flux with

new discoveries upending old assumptions and altering lines of inquiry and understanding. That is what it is supposed to do: question, investigate, challenge, and publish results for peers to review and disprove, if possible. It is rare that a scientist claims to have found an unalterable truth. To do so would be to invite aggressively enthusiastic research, experimentation, publication and in the end either vindication or evisceration. Most competent science dwells in the language of “the evidence so far

15. Carl Zimmer, *Evolution: The Triumph of an Idea*. (New York: HarperCollins, 2001, 26.

16. Norman R. Augustine, et al. “Rising Above the Gathering Storm, Revisited” *National Academies Press* (2010): 18, 19, accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12999.

indicates...” which allows for ambiguity and further inquiry. Perhaps this is the reason for public hostility. For those who crave unalterable truths and black and white solutions, such language is unsatisfying. As Americans we might find ourselves divided, standing on opposite sides of the threshold between hierarchical thinking and egalitarian thought. The hierarchical world view is prone to admiring rugged individualism and belief in the corporate structure. This sort of structure can trace its lineage to classical and medieval thought and The Great Chain of

Being¹⁷. This paradigm was embraced for centuries as inalterable truth and depicts mankind enjoying a fairly comfortable position. Existing four rungs above hell and only two rungs away from God (who is drawn as a lounging man), humans are quite near angels and archangels (see Figure 3) . The rest of creation is found on lower rungs with the bottommost tier given

over to demons and hell. This



Figure 3. *Great Chain of Being*

17. Diego Valdez, *Rhetorica Christiana* (Getty Research Institute, 2009), 220 b, accessed March 22, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/rhetoricachristi00vala>.

notion was applicable to all human dynamics, including who ruled whom in the nation, the courts, the town, and the family home. Such a tightly delineated system took root in a world that believed itself to be flat, and that spontaneous generation was reality. Interestingly, The Great Chain of Being seems to continue to color contemporary thought, while edge-of-the-world fears or belief that whales might spontaneously spring from yard clippings has faded. The vast majority of our fellow citizens who instinctively lean towards this ordered, hierarchical structure are also more likely to identify as conservative. Many resist government involvement in their lives, some so vehemently that a faction can be heard calling for the forcible overthrow of our current sitting government.¹⁸ The egalitarian view, on the other hand, tends to be suspicious of corporate monopolistic motives and prefers government oversight and regulatory controls. This perspective might espouse the equality of all persons and could include championing the rights of living beings of all kinds: persons of color, homosexuals, women, animals, and possibly even the overall biomass of the planet. If there is a threshold of hope, then the aspirations of any artist, be he or she scientist, playwright, painter, sculptor, or actor, is to pass through the doorway of not knowing and step into a world of discovery, surprise, and hopefully, survive the challenges long enough to see the world changed.

Perhaps we don't always change to survive. Sometimes it's survival that changes us.

18. Connor Radnovitch, "Bobby Jindal Says Rebellion Brewing Against Washington", *Huffington Post* (June 23, 2014), accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/22/bobby-jindal_n_5519158.html.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

ANDRAVEDA	Former veterinarian, 40 to 50. Married to Cleve. Mother of Crio and their deceased son, Dole.
CRIO	Daughter of the house. Late teens.
CLEVE	Legacy farmer and landowner, 55 to 60. Husband to Andraveda, father to Crio and their deceased son, Dole.
CAL	Geneticist and neighbor. 50 to 60.
SERVICE OFFICIAL	Voice over only; official with government land and wildlife management
DOUBLE AUGHT	An equid.

A Note about Double Aught: It would be preferred that the theatre designers involved in the production build a puppet and a person be cast in the role to act as puppeteer.

SETTING

A Family farm in Central Iowa and neighboring land
Latitude 43.4226114 N
Longitude 95.10226239999997 W

TIME

Early summer about 15 years from now.

BLOODLINES

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

(A family kitchen on a mid sized farm in rural Iowa. The house is original to the property, dating to the late 1800s. It is old but well maintained. The kitchen is modern and comfortable, but not fancy. There is a laptop on the table. CRIO enters, eating a salad, sits at the table and begins tapping away at the keyboard. ANDRAVEDA enters from outside. She is holding a fern-like plant.)

ANDRAVEDA

Crio!

CRIO

Yeah? Something wrong?

ANDRAVEDA

Look at this.

(She crosses to CRIO with the plant. CLEVE enters through the open front door, closes it)

CLEVE

Veda. Don't leave this door open. What's wrong? Something up?

ANDRAVEDA

Look at this.

CLEVE

It's a plant, Veda. Hey, Crio, better turn up the air in here. It's going to be bad this afternoon.

ANDRAVEDA

But no clouds?

CLEVE

No. No clouds, so no lightning.

ANDRAVEDA

No clouds. No lightning.

CRIO

Sure, dad. But we shouldn't run the air if we don't need...

CLEVE

We'll need it.

ANDRAVEDA

Look at this plant.

CLEVE

Ok. I'm looking. What about it?

ANDRAVEDA

Don't you see it? Do you know what this is?

CLEVE

Dunno. Some sort of weed or something. Crio, you real busy?

CRIO

Just finished my final Chemistry Final, so I'm posting it. And, there. All done. I'm all done with high school.

CLEVE

So maybe now you'll get off that computer and I can get your help around here.

(ANDRAVEDA studies the plant in her hand)

ANDRAVEDA

Don't you recognize this?

CRIO

Let me see it.

(ANDRAVEDA hands the plant to CRIO who examines it)

CLEVE

Hey, Veda. We got anything for lunch?

ANDRAVEDA

I need to check the sky.

CLEVE

Honey, it's too hot for you to wander around outside...

(ANDRAVEDA opens the front door, but the door knob comes off in her hand. It is an old-fashioned thing. She hands the doorknob to CLEVE and walks out, leaving the door open. CLEVE holds the knob and watches her)

CLEVE (cont'd)

And she's gone. She'll get burned again. Doesn't seem to care. And now I'll have to fix this. Been on that door for hundred fifty years. Gotta keep it together, here.

(CLEVE shuts the door)

Crio, do you know if there's anything to eat?

CRIO

Just a second. I'm gonna look this up...

(CLEVE waits impatiently while CRIO does a quick computer search)

CLEVE

So what is there for lunch?

Crio, I been out in the heat since before sun-up. I'm tired and hungry.

CRIO

Yes, sure, sorry. Um, I dunno. Peanut butter?

CLEVE

Nothing else?

CRIO

I could print a pizza.

CLEVE

Don't you dare. I will never eat anything from that machine.

CRIO

Dad, it's the same food as...

CLEVE

Don't start with that. It isn't. It's squeezed from a machine. It's not food.

CRIO

Okay, okay. Oh, I know; there's meatloaf from Sunday.

CLEVE

Oh?

CRIO

From Sunday. Remember? Mom cooked.

CLEVE

She did, didn't she. Used the microwave and everything.

CRIO

Just like old times.

(CLEVE waits for CRIO to offer to fix it, which she does)

I can get a piece for you.

CLEVE

Yeah. Ok.

(CRIO gets up and crosses to kitchen area. CLEVE approaches the computer. CRIO quickly intervenes)

CRIO

Dad, don't. Don't mess with my computer, it's been twitchy enough. I tell you what... I'll get your lunch going but when it dings - YOU take it out and eat it. Deal?

CLEVE

Deal.

CRIO

You can look at some of this stuff. I think that might be the plant, there. But don't touch anything. I'll be right back.

CLEVE

Ok.

(CRIO goes to ice box, pulls out leftovers, cuts piece, puts it on a dish and places in the microwave. CLEVE squints at CRIO'S screen, keeping his hands behind his back. CRIO returns to computer and sits)

CRIO

It's going. Be done pretty quick. So you think that's it?

CLEVE

Looks right. Don't know why Veda is so interested in it, though.

Well, it is a bit weird. CRIO

Weird, how? CLEVE

Oh, it just isn't broadleaf... CRIO

(ding)

That's you. CRIO (cont'd)

Yeah. CLEVE

(ANDRAVEDA enters)

Something's done. What's done? ANDRAVEDA

Lunch. You hungry? CLEVE

Lunch? ANDRAVEDA

We can all eat together. Crio, get us plates, will you? CLEVE

Ok. CRIO

(CRIO gets plates and forks)

Veda, shut the front door and sit with me. CLEVE

(CLEVE goes to the microwave, removes meatloaf, ANDRAVEDA closes door but remains by it)

Mom. It's the meatloaf from Sunday. It's great warmed up. CRIO

ANDRAVEDA

Sunday was warm.

(CLEVE returns to table with food, sits)

CLEVE

C'mon, Veda, sit and eat.

ANDRAVEDA

No. No thanks.

CLEVE

It's pretty good. You used that old recipe.

ANDRAVEDA

It smells.

CLEVE

Yeah, smells good; beef's from our own herd.

(ANDRAVEDA joins him and she and CRIO sit)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Everyone, let's say grace.

(The family gathers around, holds hands while CLEVE says a short grace. Then CLEVE prepares to eat. ANDRAVEDA sniffs at her food. She is not trying to be cruel, just observing facts)

ANDRAVEDA

Smells. Smells like cooked flesh. Dole smelled like that.

(CLEVE drops his fork. CRIO is devastated by this comment)

CRIO

Mom.

CLEVE

God, Veda.

(all sit in silence for a moment)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Well, not hungry now. Guess this'll have to wait til later.

(CLEVE gets up from the table with his plate and puts it on the kitchen counter. ANDRAVEDA rises and crosses to the door and tries to open it. CRIO sits in silence)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Veda, leave that shut, will you? Don't want all that heat in.

(ANDRAVEDA contents herself with looking out the window of the door)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

So, maybe that peanut butter?

(CRIO rises and crosses to sink area with her plate)

CRIO

Yeah, dad, I'll make a sandwich for you, okay?

CLEVE

Sure. Appreciate it.

(During the following, CRIO makes a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and brings it to CLEVE while he waits at the table)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Oh, hey. Cal drove by this morning while I was in the fields. Stopped long enough to enlighten me about the Service's new water access initiatives. "Plots" he calls them.

CRIO

You were talkin' to Cal?

CLEVE

Oh, yeah, Cal's got lots to say from the safety of his old pick-up. Oh, and then, and this was great, he tries to scare me about seeing deer out there. Deer. He's a piece of work.

CRIO

Cal saw a deer. A live deer.

CLEVE

So he says. Best part was, he goes on to say he thinks we should all give up on hay. Just plant bamboo, he hollers, and drives off.

CRIO

Bamboo?

(CLEVE talks between bites of sandwich)

CLEVE

Yeah. Might be right about that. Put in a batch while there's still enough water to start it. Market's real good for bamboo. Better than beef, it seems. Grows like crazy too. Not bothered by the wind.

There is a drought tolerant species.

Bamboo farm in Iowa. Who would believe it.

ANDRAVEDA

Bam. Boo.

CLEVE

Yeah.

ANDRAVEDA

Bamboo?

CLEVE

Yes, Veda.

ANDRAVEDA

Why are you talking about an old Disney movie?

CLEVE

Bamboo? No, Veda... that, that was Bambi. Bam. Bee.

ANDRAVEDA

Oh. Cal wants us to raise deer?

CLEVE

No, he doesn't. Crio...

CRIO

Mom, don't worry about it. Cal was just making stuff up.

ANDRAVEDA

I'm mixed up, yes? I'll go back outside.

CRIO

It's okay.

ANDRAVEDA

Yes. It's windy. But the sky is clear. Clear blue.

(ANDRAVEDA exits out front door)

CRIO

Dad. She just stares and stares at the sky.

CLEVE

She's bad today?

CRIO

Except she's happy. She's not so angry. Maybe...

CLEVE

Crio, leave it, never mind. You good for chores, for this afternoon shift? You can do all the work?

CRIO

Yes, Dad. I can do as much as Dole.

(Silence)

CLEVE

Dole was fast. Fast and strong.

CRIO

I know.

CLEVE

Okay. You go ahead but be careful. Lightning storm can come up fast, so watch the sky. Guess I can stick around here, then. Keep an eye on Veda.

What they saying about that weed? Not Eastern Red?

CRIO

Nope, it's not Eastern Red. Looks a little like something called Pterusphytum. Uh, says it's aggressive.

CLEVE

Great. Well, do I need to do something about it? When I was a kid, we could get away with a spray and a burn back there, but not now. No way, no how. Service drones see that, be on us like, well, we'd be in trouble. Fires these days...

CRIO

Yes, yes, like "The Big Burn of 2015". I know, I know.

CLEVE

Hey, it was bad, it was intentional, and no one ever knew who did it. People died, you know. Your mom was out there for weeks after trying to save livestock. Only large animal vet still around. And I lost the last of my best studs in that fire. Oh you were just little, you don't remember.

CRIO

I remember Cowboy.

CLEVE

Do you? Well good, at least you remember something about then. I ran the best quarter horse farm around. Anyway, do we have to worry about whatever that stuff is?

(CRIO reads the site information)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Crio, what's it saying? We both got plenty to do now, and if we gotta schedule some big project with your brother gone and Veda not right, what's it say?

CRIO

Ok, but you hate this stuff. Says pull and dig it out. By hand. It says it is a new strain, genetically linked to an extinct species...

CLEVE

By hand? Oh bull crap. They gotta stop with that stuff. Dig all that out? What does the Service site say?

CRIO

That's what I've got up.

CLEVE

Lemme see that.

CRIO

Not gonna be different just 'cause you look at it.

(ANDRAVEDA has been fooling with the broken door, opens door and stands in doorway)

ANDRAVEDA

What are you two arguing about?

CRIO

I think I found that weed.

ANDRAVEDA

Weed?

CLEVE

Shut that door, Veda. Please.

(ANDRAVEDA tries to shut the front door but it swings open.)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Veda, I swear...

CRIO

Here, Mom, take a look at the service site. Do you think this looks right?

Dad, I'll get the door.

(CRIO goes to door and blocks it shut with a book. ANDRAVEDA crosses to computer and looks at screen)

ANDRAVEDA

Yes. From our south pastures. It's beautiful. Look at it.

CLEVE

South? Veda, you weren't in the south pastures.

CRIO

Mom, where did you say?

ANDRAVEDA

The spot, the place. This has filled it; made it green again. And it looks like my mark.

CLEVE

Now, Veda, it does not.

(CRIO holds up the plant)

CRIO

Kinda does, dad. I thought that, too.

CLEVE

Crio, don't encourage her. Now Veda, this pattern, this is just math, or science, see, it's the way things like this work...

ANDRAVEDA

Stop telling me what I see, what I know. This plant looks exactly like my mark.

(ANDRAVEDA pulls off her shirt to reveal a fern patterned scar)

ANDRAVEDA (CONT'D)

You think you just pronouncing things a certain way makes them that way. Well it doesn't. It just makes you wrong. Just, wrong.

CLEVE

Veda.

CRIO

Mom, are your ears bothering you?

(silence)

Are they?

(ANDRAVEDA puts her shirt back on)

ANDRAVEDA

I should go back outside. The wind, the wind covers the ringing. But nothing is changed. My mark is the plant. The plant is my mark. They are the same.

CLEVE

Veda.

(ANDRAVEDA exits out front door, slams it shut. CRIO and CLEVE remain silent for a moment)

CRIO

I think I'll get chores started.

CLEVE

Don't forget to check tanks out there.

CRIO

Sure, I won't.

CLEVE

And if you water, make sure you shut the valve tight. No leaks.

CRIO

Yes. I can do it. I'll use a wrench if I have to.

CLEVE

No, Crio, don't wrench it, you'll bust it - we can't afford to replace that whole line. Look, just by hand. You think you're strong enough?

CRIO

Yes, dad. I'll make sure it's shut off.

CRIO (CONT'D)

Um, So, I might take the mini when I'm done. Just have a look around, see if I can figure out where mom found this. That be okay?

CLEVE

Crio, you're always trying to figure a way out of chores.

CRIO

No, I just...

CLEVE

Just do what needs to be done around here, will ya? And keep an eye on the sky. With this heat, we could get a storm.

CRIO

Yes, okay.

CLEVE

Your mother near by?

CRIO

Mom? She's just resting on the porch. At least, I thought she was. Oh, There she is. She's just sitting there.

CLEVE

Fine. I got bookwork and stuff to catch up. Oh, Crio, after chores look around that Service site some more. They've gotta have better instructions for those weeds. Dig it out by hand.

(CLEVE exits to another part of the house. CRIO looks at the plant in her hand as lights fade)

END SCENE ONE

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

(CRIO is in an open area surrounded by woods. We can hear sounds of wind in the trees and some crows calling. There is a great deal of dense fern-like vegetation around her. There are flies which CRIO periodically swats at. She is examining the ferns, communicating via her cellphone to a Service official. Phone is on speaker so we can hear what the unseen Service official is saying.)

CRIO

Yeah, I thought you guys could help with this. Thanks for looking at it.

So this is it. Lots of it, too...seeing it okay on your end?

SERVICE OFFICIAL

Yes, we're getting good images. Keep the camera back a little, though. Want to get a sense of the area affected.

CRIO

Oh, sure. Sorry, here. Better?

SERVICE OFFICIAL

Yes.

(a pause)

That's quite a lot.

CRIO

Is it? What should we do?

SERVICE OFFICIAL

We're just confirming the presence of...wait a second.

(silence, a long moment)

CRIO

Should I keep running this?

(silence)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Hello?

SERVICE OFFICIAL

We've locked on your location. Getting a drone dispatched for aerial now. I don't understand why these coordinates aren't already registered with us. Well. Hell.

CRIO

Excuse me?

SERVICE OFFICIAL

Oh, just. There's a lot of that stuff. You are just now calling this in?

CRIO

Uh, well... we just now realized it was here. See this area, this is where... well we had a deal, a thing happened here, and...

SERVICE OFFICIAL

You've allowed an overgrowth in a watch area. You were responsible for maintaining that location, preventing this sort of damage. It's part of your Legacy agreement.

CRIO

I guess, but...

SERVICE OFFICIAL

How long you say since you worked that area?

CRIO

I don't know. Couple years, I guess.

SERVICE OFFICIAL

Years? Well. Got one.

CRIO

What's that mean?

SERVICE OFFICIAL

I'm going to have to send this on up.

CRIO

Wait...

SERVICE OFFICIAL

“You may not allow an area larger than two acres to remain untended for more than twelve months. If a landowner fails to...”. Anyway, you’re in violation of your Legacy pact with the State.

CRIO

But...

SERVICE OFFICIAL

I’ll send this on up.

CRIO

No! I called you for help, not...look... please, you don’t understand.

SERVICE OFFICIAL

Whatever it is, doesn’t matter.

CRIO

It does too matter, dammit! My mom was hit by lightning here, okay? She and my brother.

(silence)

CRIO (CONT’D)

My brother died here. It was bad. He was driven straight into the ground, you get it? My dad had to dig his body out. So is it okay with you, if we sort of didn’t hang around this particular spot and garden?

(silence)

CRIO (CONT’D)

Hello?

SERVICE OFFICIAL

We are sorry for your loss.

CRIO

Really? Then help us.

SERVICE OFFICIAL

Listen, I’ve no choice. Now that your shots are up, my supervisor knows. I couldn’t hide this if I wanted to, honest.

CRIO

Great. So, now what?

SERVICE OFFICIAL

You will be contacted.

CRIO

Oh, that's just great.

SERVICE OFFICIAL

Thank you for calling your Polk County Extension Service. We value your vigilance. Good-bye.

CRIO

C'mon, Can't you even...?

(the connection ends)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Oh lord. Oh lord, I am in so much trouble. Dad is gonna...

(CRIO sits down amid the plants for a moment, looking at her phone. Impulsively, she throws the phone down. Immediately she regrets that and starts searching for it in the brush. She finds the phone. A noise gets her attention)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Uh...? Hello? Somebody there?

(silence)

Oh, okay, not funny, Cal. C'mon Cal, I know it's you.

(CRIO rises. There is another sound, a soft vocal sound)

Hey that's pretty good, Cal. What do you call that? Biggest crack in the county?

(CRIO moves towards sound)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Stop it now, you're being mega weird. And that's saying something for you.

(another soft vocal sound)

CRIO (CONT'D)

What? What is that?

(CRIO kneels down and pushes back some vegetation to discover a small animal resting among the leaves)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Holy... It's a deer. Cal wasn't fooling around. It's a deer! Oh, little thing. Where's your mama? We haven't had deer here...since...well all the culling and stuff.

(soft noise from the animal. CRIO tries to scare it away)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Shoo! Git. You ought to run off, shouldn't you? What am I supposed to do? I have NO idea what protocols... What are you doing here? Oh crap. The stupid Service is on its way, they find you, and... oh man, oh man, oh man.

(CRIO starts to leave)

CRIO (CONT'D)

I never saw you. I don't know anything about you.

(rustle in vegetation of animal moving)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Don't care. Leaving.

(a small sound from the animal. CRIO stops.)

CRIO (CONT'D)

God.

(CRIO returns)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Great. What am I supposed to do? Take you home? Right. "Gee Dad, sorry I lost the farm to the Service today, but look what I found. Can we keep him, huh, can we, huh...pullleeze?" "Oh, yes. That'll be just fine".

(CRIO looks around)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Still. If I leave you out here, Service will surely find you. You're on our land, so...one more thing I screwed up today. They hit us with invasive weeds AND restricted wildlife. I might be able to get you up on the mini. Could hide you in the barn just for tonight. You can't be that heavy...

(CRIO attempts to pick up the animal, pulls hand away)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Eww...you're bleeding. Okay, it's okay. Mom can help. If she remembers any stuff. Lemme just think for a sec...

(CRIO stands to look at the animal for a minute)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Well. Fine. I'm in so much trouble now. Stupidly called the Service...it won't matter what I bring back, dad'll kill me anyway. I'm dead meat, plain and simple.

(Crio lifts up the animal and exits. Lights fade on field, come up on the barn interior. CRIO and ANDRAVEDA are with the animal)

ANDRAVEDA

Crio...

CRIO

I know, I know, but mom, it's just a little deer and it's hurt.

ANDRAVEDA

It's been shot.

CRIO

Shot? Who would shoot it? Hunting is illegal out there.

(ANDRAVEDA is silent for a moment)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Oh. Probably Cal. Ok, I know, little thing won't make it.

ANDRAVEDA

Might, might not.

CRIO

Yeah. Mom...

ANDRAVEDA

Hmm?

CRIO

Are you gonna help it?

ANDRAVEDA

Help?

CRIO

Mom! Can't you do something?

ANDRAVEDA

Maybe, I don't know. What should I do, do you think?

CRIO

Mom, you're a vet!

ANDRAVEDA

Not now.

CRIO

But you still know. You know all about fixing animals. Please, Mom? You know this stuff.

ANDRAVEDA

No. Well, I know it's a girl.

CRIO

How do you... oh. Well, that's fine but we need to DO something!

ANDRAVEDA

Like what?

CRIO

Stop the bleeding, remove the bullet, clean the wound, suture the opening, stuff like that!

ANDRAVEDA

You know what to do.

CRIO

Mom! C'mon, I don't have training, I've never done that stuff!

ANDRAVEDA

Better get started. Shocky. Keep her warm. And keep the flies away from her.

(CRIO shoos at flies trying to land on the animal's wound. ANDRAVEDA begins to search around the barn)

CRIO

OW! They're really biting. Mom? What are you doing? I need your help!

ANDRAVEDA

Yes, you need help. I'm going to find you some books.

CRIO

Books? You're getting me some books? Are you kidding? Mom?

(ANDRAVEDA is busily searching for books. CRIO grabs a box marked MEDICAL and finds bandages, antiseptics, etc. and begins to care for the animal)

CRIO (CONT'D)

I have no idea what I'm doing...you know that, right? Ick.

(CRIO works on the animal for a bit)

CRIO (CONT'D)

How do I know if the bullet is in there? Oh, wait, well, if there is a wound on the other side... does that mean the bullet went on through?

ANDRAVEDA

Yes? Where are my books? Oh, here.

CRIO

Mom! I gotta get some help here. It looks like a straight path, like the bullet went along on the outside, so there is a hole here and another kind of gash goes along here. Makes sense. Poor little thing, so quiet. Like it's given up or something. Why doesn't it fight?

(ANDRAVEDA carries some books to CRIO)

ANDRAVEDA

Might be in shock. You should have some books.

CRIO

Seriously? You want me to read right now?

ANDRAVEDA

I don't want you to do anything. You're the one who wants to know stuff. Stuff is in books.

CRIO

Great. Okay, okay, but could you just watch? Let me know if I do something really wrong? Mom?

(ANDRAVEDA comes to where CRIO and the animal are. She sits down and holds the animal in her lap)

ANDRAVEDA

Yes, I'll hold the animal, I'd like to do that. I can keep it calm, warm. You're doing fine. That's right. Clean out the area. Go away, fly. Shh, shh, little thing, you're alright. Yes, now maybe cut some of that hair away so you can tell... and air can get to it. Scissors. Yes. Clean all that out of there. Shhhh.... it's okay.

(CRIO and ANDRAVEDA sit back and look at their work)

ANDRAVEDA (CONT'D)

Now to keep it clean. What do you think?

CRIO

Bandage?

ANDRAVEDA

But how?

CRIO

Well, there's this stuff and this wrap stuff...and some ointment...

ANDRAVEDA

Okay.

CRIO

But is that right?

ANDRAVEDA

Dunno. Try it. If it works it's right, if it doesn't, it's not.

CRIO

Mom, I swear to...heaven... Ow! Darn these flies. Mom, aren't you getting bit? They're all over your arm, there.

ANDRAVEDA

No?

CRIO

Mom, they're biting you.

(CRIO waves flies away from ANDRAVEDA, then puts salve on animal's wound)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Didn't you feel that?

ANDRAVEDA

No.

CRIO

Okay. But you're getting welts. You're getting bit.

ANDRAVEDA

Didn't notice. Finish bandaging. Shhh, shhhh, little thing. Little thing with a funny face. Funny feet, funny marks. Funny thing.

CRIO

Okay, there. Is that good? I've cleaned that icky strip out, cut the matted hair away, gauzed it and wrapped it.

ANDRAVEDA

Water.

CRIO

Huh?

ANDRAVEDA

Water. It should have water.

CRIO

Not on the clean gauze. Oh, you mean it's thirsty?

ANDRAVEDA

It should get water. Water over food. Over food.

CRIO

Okay, you want to keep holding it? I've got water right here.

(CRIO pulls a canteen from her pack, pours water into her hand and offers it to the animal.)

ANDRAVEDA

There. There you go.

CRIO

It's thirsty.

ANDRAVEDA

Good that it's drinking. Will need a pan, though, you can't hand water all day.

CRIO

Okay, I can get that.

(CRIO rises and looks around for pan)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Mom. I, uh... well... I went down to the south pasture today. You know? The south pasture. The spot where...

ANDRAVEDA

You found this girl there, did you?

CRIO

Yeah, that's where I found this little deer.

ANDRAVEDA

Oh.

(During the following CRIO finds pan and returns, pouring water into it)

ANDRAVEDA (CONT'D)

Yes she was thirsty. There's a good girl. You drink some of that. I've been down there, too, Crio.

CRIO

You have? Well sure, that's where you found the plant, isn't it?

ANDRAVEDA

Yes. I love to see all the green. And when a storm is coming...

CRIO

Mom!

ANDRAVEDA

It's fine. Lately, when there's a storm heading in, I sneak away from here and go there.

CRIO

Mom! That's so dangerous! Why? Why would you do that?

ANDRAVEDA

Where I want to be. I can really see. Really see.

CRIO

See what?

ANDRAVEDA

Dole.

CRIO

Mom. Don't say that, you don't see Dole. He's gone.

(ANDRAVEDA becomes agitated)

ANDRAVEDA

No he's there, Crio, right there. I can see him, in the flashes, I can see him.

CRIO

Okay, don't get mad. It's okay. I believe you. I do.

ANDRAVEDA

No. No you don't but you're going to say that, to keep me calm. I get upset. I do. I know I do. I look right at things and I know I should know them, but I don't. Except for you. I will never forget you. Or Dole.

CRIO

Mom, what do you remember about treating injured animals?

ANDRAVEDA

Oh, yes. This little one. The thing is, Crio, this is a funny little thing. I saw one of them out there before, too. And, you know it's not a deer.

CRIO

Mom. Yes it is. Cal said he saw a deer. There's probably more. Maybe they've come back somehow.

ANDRAVEDA

Oh. Cal said. This isn't a deer. Look Crio, look at those feet. Odd number toes. No deer. Deer have split hooves, up the center...cloven. Cloven hooves, not this. How come you don't see that? And these markings. They're more like...

CRIO

Like what? Mom? Like what?

ANDRAVEDA

Like prime. No, not prime. Ancient, oh what is the word? Well, they're beautiful. From long ago. And I remember something else about them, but, Crio, this thing is not a deer.

CRIO

Okay, then what is she?

ANDRAVEDA

Oh, what words? I'm losing the words. I have a book somewhere. Books have the words. I'll look it up. That's right. Look it up. Maybe in the tack room. I'll find it. You can decide what you think.

CRIO

Really? More reading material? Mom?

(ANDRAVEDA exits to another part of the barn. A figure appears in the doorway and watches for a moment before speaking. This is CAL)

CAL

So, there you are.

CRIO

Who the...! Who are you?

CAL

Cal.

CRIO

Cal?

CAL

Whatcha got there?

CRIO

Well, I found this. So, wait a second, what are you even doing here?

CAL

Thought I'd seen something out there. Followed the tracks, then tire marks. After the blood trail gave out, there were tire marks. Wasn't hard to figure out.

CRIO

Oh. Well, I guess I wasn't really trying to hide my tracks.

CAL

So, can I see?

CRIO

Why? What for?

CAL

Curious.

CRIO

About what? Did you shoot her?

CAL

She was shot?

(CLEVE enters during this.)

CLEVE

Crio, have you seen your mom...hullo.

CAL

Hey.

CLEVE

Who are you?

CAL

Cal.

CLEVE

Cal?

CAL

Yes, Cal. I'm just chatting with your girl, here.

CLEVE

You're Cal? Okay. You're here about what, exactly?

(CAL indicates the animal)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Well, what? What is that? Crio?

CRIO

Oh god. Dad. See, I was gonna tell you. Mom and me, well I found this little thing and mom was trying to help me...

CLEVE

What on earth are you up to, Crio? Why would you bring something like that here, into the barn? What are you thinking? Why do you pull stunts like this?

(CLEVE/CRIO overlapping)

CRIO

I know, I know, Dad and I'm sorry but I couldn't just leave her there, and she was hurt...

(CLEVE crosses over to get a better look at the animal)

CLEVE

Crio, this isn't somebody's lost lamb, it's wildlife. Where'd it come from?

CRIO

Ok. So, Dad, down where that bunch of weed growth is in our south pasture, that stuff mom found...some of it is on your property too, Cal, so...

CAL

Yeah?

CRIO

So, for one thing, maybe we should get rid of it, somehow. Dad and I looked it up and it's considered an invasive species, and then I...well, turns out we should do something about it. There's lots there, on both our properties so it won't work to have just one of us get rid of it. And near the part that is on your side...

CAL

Some on my side, yeah...

CLEVE

Crio, the deer?

CRIO

So near the part that's on your side, Cal, I found this little deer, but she was on our side of the fence line. Well, my mom says it isn't a deer but whatever it is I found it on our property and it, well, it's been shot.

CLEVE

Shot? You sure?

CRIO

Well something happened to it, and I'm trying to help it.

CAL

Ain't your mamma a vet?

CRIO

She, she's not able to help much, not right now...she's, well she's looking something up for me right now.

CLEVE

Veda gets mixed up...

CAL

Ah. Right. Since the lightning strike.

CLEVE

Alright, yes, so. Crio, can you go get your mom?

CRIO

But, dad, I need to explain.

CLEVE

Crio, I get it, you found this and brought it into our barn. Big mistake. Putting the farm at risk for disease. Wildlife, well, I would've hoped you'd know better. Now, go - go get Veda.

CRIO

Yeah, okay. But, Dad, can we let the deer stay here for now. She needs to get better...

(Pointedly, at CAL)

CRIO (CONT'D)

And who knows, since she was shot, who shot her?

CLEVE

Yes, we'll discuss that, me and Cal, here. But go on now. See if your mom is still down here, or where. And wash your hands before you touch anything else.

(Distant rumble of thunder)

CRIO

Yeah. Okay.

(CRIO reluctantly exits to the other part of barn, calling as she does)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Mom?

CLEVE

So, now. You know about this?

CAL

A bit.

CLEVE

You shot it?

(CAL reacts)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Why? To eat?

CAL

NEVER eat them, you hear me? None of you, no matter how bad it gets, never eat them, understand? NEVER.

CLEVE

Easy. Ok. who wants to eat that rangy thing...wait. Them? There's more? Is this what you said you'd seen? This is the 'deer'?

(CAL shrugs)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. So there's likely more. You still haven't answered my question; you hunting back there?

CAL

It wasn't me.

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Because if you're back there shooting on my property, we've got troubles, you and me.

CAL

Ain't back there shooting.

CLEVE

One thing to let you to try your new strain of whatever that is back there, but that doesn't entitle you to prowl around with a gun on my property. Got cattle, got a teenage girl running around...

(During the following, subtle lightning and thunder sounds continue)

CAL

I'm not shooting back there.

CLEVE

Well someone is.

CAL

Could be a lot of people. C'mon, you know it's been tough out there. Lots of dried up fields, workers wandering from town to town. How many of your cattle went missing this year?

(CLEVE doesn't respond)

CAL (CONT'D)

More'n last, I bet. Anyway, no telling who was taking aim at her. Could have been kids just plinkin', could have been hungry illegals, but it sure as hell wasn't me. So yeah, I've been trying to find this damn thing, but not to kill it.

CLEVE

Why, then?

CAL

Look. Could I just...take a look?

(CAL indicates the enclosure. CLEVE nods his consent. CAL goes to the animal enclosure, kneels down to examine the animal. Pulls bandaging away, examines injury)

CAL (CONT'D)

Well, it's a bullet wound alright. Small gauge. Okay job with this bandaging.

CLEVE

Funny thing is, you're the only other person I ever see back there. *Cal*.

(CAL stands up)

CAL

Yeah. About that. Woman alone out here, especially these days. Easier if I read like a man, ya know?

CLEVE

S'pose. I just never even questioned it. Never seen you closer than the road, so, well. Anyway, never did get a chance to... I appreciated your help back when. After...

CAL

No problem. Tough time, losing your boy like that. Wasn't nothin' to look after a few acres and your herd for a while.

CLEVE

You did more than that. You arranged things with the service so we could take care of what we needed to, which we appreciate...

(CLEVE extends his hand to shake CAL'S, but CAL moves away)

CAL

Like I said, no big deal.

CLEVE

I'm trying to thank you proper, Cal.

CAL

No need.

CLEVE

Alright. Just a little strange because I thought I knew who you were. I guess I was wrong.

CAL

About this critter...

CLEVE

Yes, you're so interested in this little deer that you say you didn't shoot. Just trying to understand why that'd be.

CAL

Seen 'em around, is all.

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Didn't the Service kill off the deer population with that fool-headed "herd reduction" scheme?

(CLEVE kneels down to look at the animal)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Reduced 'em alright. No white tail left, anyway. Another brilliant failure brought to us by the Service. Idiots. How much crick water could deer drink, anyway.

What is up with these feet? Deformities? Nah, can't be...

(CLEVE rises and faces CAL)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Thing is, I remember hunting deer, Cal. I'm not stupid. This ain't no deer. You raisin' exotics down to your place?

(CRIO appears in doorway)

CRIO

Dad, I can't find mom. She come back in here?

CLEVE

No, Crio. I haven't seen her.

CRIO

Now I'm kinda worried. It's getting dark west of here and there's a lot of lightning. Could head this way.

CLEVE

Yeah. Ok. We can both look for her. Cal? What about it? You got some claim on this thing, yes or no?

CAL

Well, storm movin' in, you folks need to find the Missus. Maybe we can pick this up tomorrow. Leave the critter here overnight to heal up, sort it out later?

CRIO

That'll be okay, won't it dad, if she stays in the barn? She won't come in contact with the herd or anything.

(Rumble of thunder. CLEVE and CAL speak simultaneously to CRIO)

CLEVE

Yeah. I suppose. Just don't touch anything we use for the herd, promise?

CAL

And keep her in, don't lose track of her, promise?

CRIO

Promise.

(CAL looks at CRIO)

CAL

Did a good job with that.

(CAL exits)

CLEVE

Don't think you're out of hot water on this, missy. Going down to the south pasture when I told you no, then bringing this thing back with you.

CRIO

I know but, well, I just couldn't leave it there for the bugs to eat alive.

CLEVE

Crio, when are you gonna toughen up? Learn to let nature take it's course with this stuff?

CRIO

Seriously? When do we ever "let nature take it's course"?

(during this ANDRAVEDA steps forward and listens)

CLEVE

Don't start a debate, Crio. We gotta get Veda in. Where is she? We've got to find your mom before that lightning is right on top of us all.

CRIO

Right. Yes. Okay.

CLEVE

I'll go down to the road, see if she's out there. You check back at the house.

CRIO

Okay.

CLEVE

And be careful!

ANDRAVEDA

I'm standing right here.

(CLEVE and CRIO exit)

ANDRAVEDA (CONT'D)

Right here.

(Lights shift to house interior as ANDRAVEDA exits, leaving the little animal alone on stage. CRIO enters kitchen from porch)

CRIO

Mom? Mom, you here?

(ANDRAVEDA enters right behind her)

ANDRAVEDA

Hello?

CRIO

God! Mom. You scared me. Didn't see you there. Hey, we've been trying to find you. Where were you? Didn't you hear us calling?

ANDRAVEDA

Yes. You both looked right at me. Didn't see me.

CRIO

I better let dad know you're here.

(CRIO pulls out her cell phone and texts)

ANDRAVEDA

No. You don't see me.

CRIO

Mom, it's okay. There. He should get that and come back up. Uh...Mom. Dad found out about the little deer.

(silence)

CRIO (CONT'D)

You know...The little deer I found. The one in the barn.

ANDRAVEDA

Oh?

CRIO

You were helping me with it. See, you still have some blood on your jeans. Maybe you came up to change clothes?

ANDRAVEDA

Oh, I remember, I found... this. Look at this.

(ANDRAVEDA pulls out a small book and opens it)

CRIO

Oh. That's funny. It does sort of look like the deer, except...what is this book? "Evolution of the Horse"? Mom, does dad know you have this? He'll hate this.

ANDRAVEDA

No. He might. I don't remember. Part of my...the study...the training...

CRIO

You mean your veterinary work?

ANDRAVEDA

Yes. You keep this. Read it. Don't let him stop you.

(CLEVE calls from off)

CLEVE

Crio? You find her?

CRIO

Yeah! Dad, she's here.

(CRIO hides the book behind her back. As CLEVE enters, ANDRAVEDA exits)

CLEVE

Where?

ANDRAVEDA

I'm going to go change out of these clothes.

CRIO

Here.

CLEVE

Where? Crio, are you fooling around here?

(CRIO looks but ANDRAVEDA has gone)

CRIO

Oh, I guess she went to change. She had some blood and gunk on her jeans. She's okay, just a little mixed up.

(CLEVE's phone rings. He looks at it but doesn't answer it. He sits in chair)

CLEVE

Not talking to the Service right now. They can wait. Crio. Veda's getting worse. She is, and I honestly don't know how much more of this I can stand.

CRIO

She's okay. Dad, she just gets mixed up.

(pause)

CRIO (CONT'D)

So that was the Service calling?

CLEVE

Yeah, they can leave a message. I don't have any time for them today. We've still gotta get that hay up, and if there's any chance we'll get rain in this storm...

CRIO

Dad there is something more I need to tell you. See, when I went down to the fields...

CLEVE

Crio, I don't have time for long-winded stories. I've got work to do, and so do you. Between you and Veda, bringing wildlife into the barn...

CRIO

But, see...

CLEVE

What? What now?

CRIO

I told the Service. About the weeds.

CLEVE

You WHAT?

CRIO

Well, I figured they could identify it and tell us what to do. That's what they're there for, right?

(During the following, ANDRAVEDA enters and stands unnoticed)

CLEVE

Crio, I can't believe you would do something so stupid. You told them? About... oh this is just great. This is probably what they're calling about. That's pretty much it. They'll take the place, you understand that? Do you see what you've done?

CRIO

I'm sorry dad. I didn't know... Maybe they won't...

CLEVE

Oh yes they will. They've been waiting. Waiting for just one little... I'll tell you what, Dole wouldn't ever have been so dumb. Dole would've known to keep his mouth shut and not call in the Service. This is why... this just proves it.

CRIO

Dad, why are you so convinced they...

CLEVE

The aquifer, Crio! Don't you get it? Access to the aquifer. State's been angling for that for years. They've got us on a violation. Won't even have to pull eminent domain now; we violated the pact. How can you be so dumb? Service - on its way here? Probably right now. Great.

(CLEVE looks around as though seeking something, then stops)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

And there's that damn animal in the barn. Well, now I'm really gonna have to get rid of it. That'd be the last straw with them. It's gotta go, one way or another.

(CLEVE opens a drawer in the table, retrieves a gun, and slams out of the house)

CRIO

No, dad, wait.

(CRIO exits fast after CLEVE. ANDRAVEDA stands alone on stage. Black out)

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

(Lights up in barn interior. CLEVE is standing over the resting animal, prepping a gun. Subtle rumbles of thunder and flashes of lightning continue in the background. CRIO enters in a hurry)

CRIO

Dad, don't!

CLEVE

Crio, you stay out of here.

(CRIO stands between the animal and her father. She forgets about the book she's been hiding and has it in one hand)

CRIO

Just wait a minute, can't you? This isn't fair.

CLEVE

Get out of the way.

CRIO

NO! This isn't fair.

CLEVE

Fair? You wanna talk about fair? My family has lived on this land for five generations. We fought off savages, bandits, the railroads, bankers, developers and the damn government. But it took a girl with a cellphone less than a day to lose the place. Is that the fair you want to talk about?

CRIO

But dad.

CLEVE

Or how about the bolt from the blue that killed Dole and might as well have killed your mother? Because I don't know who that woman in our house is, but it sure isn't Andraveda.

CRIO

It isn't mom's fault she's messed up.

CLEVE

No, no, nothing is ever anyone's fault. Except today. Today is your fault. Losing the place to the Service, that is your fault.

CRIO

But dad, you don't know the Service will really take the whole place.

CLEVE

Don't I? What's this?

(CLEVE reaches for the book CRIO is holding. She evades him)

CRIO

Nothing. Something mom gave me. It's not important.

CLEVE

So you have time to read that nonsense, but you don't understand this place. Have you bothered to read our Legacy Agreement?

CRIO

Not. Not all of it.

CLEVE

Well Dole read it. ALL of it. And he understood it, understood that we have to hold on to our land. If you had one lick of sense you'd get it, too. But, no. You just don't get it.

(CLEVE moves to get a shot around her, CRIO counters to interfere with him.
ANDRAVEDA enters unnoticed)

CRIO

Yes, yes I do, dad. I get it. I made a mistake, I did. But what good is shooting up a little deer going to do? That won't...

(CLEVE tries again to get around CRIO. She counters)

CRIO (CONT'D)

THAT won't help, just leave a mess of blood and a carcass to hide. Do we have time for that? Look, maybe Cal. Let's get Cal to take her back. Sounded like he - I mean she - knows about them and maybe he - she - can keep her hidden.

ANDRAVEDA

Cleve.

CLEVE

What?

ANDRAVEDA

Cleve.

CLEVE

Veda? Where? Where have you been? You gotta quit disappearing like that. Can't the two of you get it together and figure out what needs to happen here?

ANDRAVEDA

Needs to happen.

CLEVE

We all gotta work together on this, Veda. The Service, probably on their way, thanks to Crio, and they can take the place now.

ANDRAVEDA

Take.

CLEVE

Yes, take. Because of that plant - the damn plant you love - it's run wild all over the south pasture.

ANDRAVEDA

South pasture. Yes. Where Dole is.

CLEVE

VEDA! NOT WHERE DOLE IS.

CRIO

Dad, don't shout at her.

CLEVE

I will shout at whoever I want. You two are going to drive me nuts. DOLE IS DEAD.

(At this the animal attracts everyone's attention by moving, standing, or making noise)

CRIO

Geez, dad, you scared it.

CLEVE

Yeah? Good. It ought'a be scared.

ANDRAVEDA

Scared.

CLEVE

Will you stop repeating everything I say.

CRIO

Dad, look. The deer is up. She looks a lot better. Maybe Cal can take her. I mean she was so interested in it. Do we have a number for Cal? Dad?

CLEVE

What?

CRIO

A phone number for Cal? If we can reach Cal and the deer can go there, is that a good solution? As good as shooting it?

CLEVE

Crio, you didn't ever go hunting with me like Dole did, so maybe you just don't know, but girl, this ain't no deer.

ANDRAVEDA

No deer.

CLEVE

Veda, I swear to god...

CRIO

Okay, well whatever it is, if Cal will take it, is that okay with you? Mom, can you go up to the house and find a number for Cal?

ANDRAVEDA

Number?

CLEVE

Never mind, just never mind. I'll do it, I'll go call. If he wants to come back over and take this thing...fine. Let him have it on his property.

CRIO

Her. Her property.

CLEVE

WHATEVER! If I can't reach him, "Cal", or whatever, if he, IT says no...well, here's what happens. If that animal isn't out of my barn and off this property in the next 30 minutes, I'm digging a hole and putting it in it. Shoot it, bury it, right there. No mess. Got that?

(CLEVE exits)

CRIO

Jesus.

ANDRAVEDA

Name?

CRIO

What?

ANDRAVEDA

Name.

CRIO

Oh, no. I don't think I should name her. She's gotta go, I gotta get her back to Cal.

ANDRAVEDA

Cal.

CRIO

Yes. Our neighbor?

(CRIO stands and drops the book on evolution ANDRAVEDA gave her)

ANDRAVEDA

Book.

CRIO

Yeah, Mom, I looked at some of it, but I haven't had time...

ANDRAVEDA

To read.

CRIO

Yeah, mom, I really don't have time to read a bunch of stuff, sorry. And anyway, I don't think she's uh, a hippus-whatever. Can't be.

ANDRAVEDA

Can be. Dawn Horse. Oh, Dawn.

CRIO

No, no. I'm not naming her. No names. Dad's so mad, I've gotta get her out of here.

ANDRAVEDA

Out of here.

CRIO

Yep.

(CRIO stops for a moment, hesitating. She then proceeds in earnest)

CRIO (CONT'D)

I'm not going to wait for dad to get a hold of Cal. I'm just gonna go. I can get to Cal's before that storm gets here.

(CRIO lifts the animal up)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Hey, thanks mom. I'll be right back. Tell dad.

(CRIO exits, carrying the animal. ANDRAVEDA watches them go as lights fade)

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

(Lights up on CAL's place. Interior of a converted out building. It is a work room, a little messy. There are log books, notebooks, etc. scattered around the room. Some images of horses and early equids are pinned to a wall. There are also beakers, microscopes, and other indications of scientific research but also a practical area for feeding and watering of animals. A small enclosure is indicated by a farm gate and some shavings on the floor. The door is slightly open. CRIO appears in the doorway, the animal in her arms. She hesitates)

CRIO

Hello? Okay if I come in?

Hey? Hello? Brought the deer back...

(CRIO enters and begins to look around. The animal makes a noise and CRIO puts it down in the enclosure.)

CRIO

Well, guess you can go here. Looks okay. Is that okay for now? I'll find you some water.

(CRIO goes to sink area, runs water. She notices an open log book and begins reading. Fills pan, takes it to enclosure. Returns to sink area and reads. There is another noise and CRIO sees CAL, who is slouching in the threshold of a doorway, not looking well. CRIO goes to CAL)

CRIO

Oh, jeez. Do you need help?

(CRIO helps CAL up and over to a chair. CAL sits wearily. Throughout this conversation CAL is clearly in some discomfort)

CRIO (CONT'D)

You okay?

CAL
Depends what you mean by “ok”.

CRIO
So, not.

CAL
Smart.

CRIO
Are you going to be okay? Do you need some water or something?

CAL
Water. Sure. Thanks.

(CRIO returns to sink area where log book had been)

CAL (CONT'D)
Glass should be beside the book you were looking at.

CRIO
Oh. Hey. Sorry, I was just...

CAL
Reading my personal logs.

CRIO
No! Well. Sorry. I was just, well sorry.

(CRIO brings a glass of water to CAL)

CAL
Oh stop apologizing. I would'a looked too.

CRIO
So I brought the deer back.

CAL
So I see. Thought it was stayin' there, which woulda been okay.

(CAL drinks the water)

CAL (CONT'D)
You gonna be a vet like your mama?

CRIO

What? Oh, no. I don't think so. What happened to you, anyway? Do you need to see a doctor?

CAL

Oh, yes, probably. But not going. I'll be alright. Just got a little too worn out.

CRIO

Okay. Well...

(CRIO indicates the enclosure)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Is she okay if I put her in there?

CAL

Yep. Funny. I had the impression you wanted to keep her.

CRIO

Well, dad didn't want her around. So. Did he call you? He was going to call you.

CAL

Oh, phone went off but I couldn't exactly get to it.

(pause)

CAL (CONT'D)

And what is it you want?

CRIO

Huh? I'm just bringing her someplace safe, is all.

CAL

I mean didn't you want to keep her? Isn't that what you wanted to do?

CRIO

Look, we've got a lot going on right now, and I'm in so much hot water at home, that this, this was just adding to the troubles, that's all. She's doing much better now and I figured, since you said you were interested, I could bring her here. That's all.

CAL

You still think I shot her?

CRIO

I really don't.

CAL

Well, that's good. Keep looking around, what do you see?

CRIO

An animal facility, I guess. Pretty advanced. More than it looks from outside.

CAL

Supposed to look unimportant from the road. Any of that stuff in the logs make sense to you?

CRIO

Some of it.

CAL

Well then, you can tell we record every little thing here.

CRIO

You don't experiment on her.

CAL

Well, not exactly. More like she is the experiment. C'mon smart girl. I know you can tell she's a bit odd. Tell me what you think she is. I'm curious what you make of her.

CRIO

Okay. Mom gave me this book. About horse evolution. I didn't read all of it, because dad, well some of that just sets him off, so I couldn't have it out.

CAL

Yep. I know the type.

CRIO

He has a very strong faith, that's all. Some stuff, he just doesn't accept.

CAL

Yep, that's the type I know.

CRIO

He believes in God, the bible, so...

CAL

That's him. What about you?

CRIO

Well, I was interested in helping her. Mom said - anyway - I read what I could in the barn and stuff. Some of the pictures, they do sort of look like her, except...

CAL

Different.

CRIO

Yeah. But the feet, the markings, that all really isn't deer, is it? And not any kind of goat, either. I'm not sure what else she would be. If she's not some type of goat, or deer.

CAL

"When you have eliminated the impossible..."

CRIO

I know that. What is that?

CAL

"...whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." You know it?

CRIO

I've heard it before.

CAL

Well that's something, I guess. So what is impossible here?

CRIO

That she's some sort of throwback.

CAL

And why is that impossible?

CRIO

Well, I don't know. Maybe "impossible" is too strong. Unlikely.

CAL

Improbable.

(Pause. CRIO looks at the animal for a moment)

CRIO

Look, all due respect, I gotta get back. And believe me, she's way better off here than at my house right now.

(CRIO starts for the door)

CAL

Why? What's happened since earlier?

CRIO

My dad. He, he was, well he said he was gonna shoot her if you wouldn't take her in.

CAL

Was he.

CRIO

Yes. I really think he was. So, anyway, I figured since you came all the way over, actually let us see, well, meet you, it'd be okay with you if I brought her over here.

CAL

She actually lives here.

CRIO

She lives here?

CAL

Yep. Got a small herd of them.

CRIO

A herd? You do? Where?

(CAL indicates a door)

CRIO

So, you raise them?

CAL

Yes. And study them.

CRIO

I don't get it. If you raise them then you must know what she is. Why were you acting like you didn't?

CAL

Long story.

CAL (CONT'D)

But for the record, she's an equid.

CRIO

Equid? That's a horse.

CAL

Yep.

CRIO

But she can't be, she's so small, and not...

CAL

I didn't say she was a modern equid. Well, I guess technically she is, because she's here, but...

CRIO

Wait, are you trying to tell me this is some sort of clone or something?

CAL

Mostly, I'm trying to tell you that she is a very important specimen who keeps getting off the property.

CRIO

Well that's on you for not checking fences.

(CAL studies CRIO for a moment)

CAL

You wanna job?

CRIO

What?

CAL

You want a job? I can't keep all this going alone, at least not right now. Need help around here, that's all. You're pretty smart, and things like that crack about the fences, that's right on the money. Fences do need work. What do you think?

CRIO

I don't think I can.

CAL

Pay's good. A job in the biotech field - pretty impressive. Nothing too hard about it, just keep the critters going. And here.

CRIO

Well, I'm not sure.

CAL

How old are you?

CRIO

What?

CAL

How old are you?

CRIO

Sixteen. Well, seventeen this summer.

CAL

But done with high school?

CRIO

Just now. Just finished.

CAL

Early.

CRIO

Well, I home schooled, mostly on-line stuff, so I could get through the material, and well, it went fast.

CAL

And next?

CRIO

I guess, college.

CAL

Let's see, seventeen...depends what you want to do, really. Might be worth it, might not.

CRIO

Didn't you go to college? You must have.

CAL

Oh hell yes. I have a damn Ph.D. But that was then, this is now. Gotta know it's what you want.

(With effort, CAL crosses over to the enclosure and looks at the animal)

CAL (CONT'D)

What do you think? Interested? You could look after this little one, and her pals. Keep her safe if you're here to take charge of her. Make sure she doesn't break out again.

CRIO

Well, I might be, I mean I would have been, but, well, we've got a lot of trouble at home right now, so...

CAL

Your mama, you mean?

CRIO

No, not exactly. All that stuff growing up on the south pasture. Dad says the Service... well, the Service site says we're gonna have to clear it all out, or...

CAL

Oh, that. No you won't.

CRIO

Huh?

CAL

You don't have to clear it out. Actually, I need it.

CRIO

You do? For what? The Service is saying it's invasive and...

CAL

And it's what these critters eat. It's gotta stay where it is. I can call them, clear this up.

CRIO

But, but the Service is sending someone over, dad says they'll take our place because of it... violates our...

CAL

The Legacy Pact? They don't give a shit about that, or the plants. What they want is the water. "The Almighty Aquifer". Well the mighty aquifer has retreated and sadly, the last of it sits right under your farm.

CRIO

That's what dad says.

CAL

And he's right. Dry wells everywhere south of here. Except, strangely, your farm. Your farm is where the water ends. And the games begin. So make a deal with them.

CRIO

A deal?

CAL

Yes. Don't pick a fight with them about drilling new wells on your land. You'll lose anyway. Make a deal.

CRIO

Make a deal. With the Service. Right.

CAL

Trust me. It's possible. Think about it. Do they care about the weeds in your south pasture? No, not unless you're irrigating.

CRIO

No, we haven't even been working that...

CAL

Right. I know. So they won't care. They need to solve a water crisis. Today. Need to go back to the townies and say, "oh yes, we can provide you with all the safe drinking water you need for years to come". Even if it's a lie, they've got to say it.

CRIO

But they can just order us to...

CAL

Oh sure. Sure they can. And bring every pissed off, gun toting rancher and farmer to your front yard for a standoff. Start the water wars overnight. They don't dare. At least not yet.

CRIO

They don't dare? Dad acts like they can do anything, at anytime to any of us.

CAL

Well, it's not as bad as that. Not yet.

CRIO

You keep saying that, "not yet", like something is going to happen. Are you a "dooms-dayer"?

CAL

That's pretty funny. I am and I'm not. Depends on how you define "doom".

(CRIO's phone goes off. She pulls it out and looks at it)

CRIO

Uh-oh, I should get back. Sounds like there's a break in the weather.

CAL

Sure, sure. Hey, would you do one thing for me before you go? Speaking of water.

CRIO

What?

CAL

Could you check out there? See if the tank is full? You can meet the rest. There's only seven right now, so not many. Count noses, will ya? Hose is off to your left. Just top it off if it's low. Appreciate it.

CRIO

I guess.

(CRIO exits. CAL takes out her phone and reads a text message and taps in a reply. CRIO re-enters)

CRIO

Okay, there's water. All seven accounted for. They're pretty funny.

CAL

How so?

CRIO

Oh, they looked surprised when they saw me, and they go bouncing around, funny like. Then they turned like "oh, hey, who are you?" and bounced back up, all curious.

CAL

Did they drink?

CRIO

No. They just looked at me.

CAL

Yeah, sometimes they get picky. Won't drink well water.

CRIO

What water do they... oh the artesian?

CAL

Jesus I hate that word. "Ar-tee-ziuhn". It's spring water, for god's sake. And your little pal knows just how to get out so she can get to it.

(Knock at the door. CLEVE calls from off)

CLEVE

Crio? Crio, are you in there?

CRIO

It's my dad. He's been trying to...

CAL

Yeah, just read a text from him. On his way.

(CAL calls louder, so CLEVE can hear)

CAL

Just a minute.

(CAL crosses to door and opens it)

CAL (CONT'D)

Yeah?

(CLEVE stands in doorway, CAL blocks his way)

CLEVE

Been trying to reach you, Cal. That's my mini out front, so... Crio? You in there?

CRIO

Yes, I'm here.

CLEVE

Well. May I come in? My daughter is in there.

CAL

Oh, sure, sure. Have the whole damn family over.

(CAL makes way for CLEVE. He looks around, then enters)

CLEVE

So, this is your place. Oh and there's that little "deer". You taking it in, I guess?

(CAL shrugs. CRIO gives CAL a look)

CAL

Yes, yes it can stay here.

CLEVE

Good. Crio, let's go.

CAL

I was just offering your girl a job, if she's interested.

CLEVE

Job? Doing what?

CRIO

Cal just asked if I could help take care of things, doing chores and stuff.

CLEVE

I see. Chores and stuff. Like the ones you're supposed to be doing at home?

CRIO

I'm all done with school now dad, so I figure I have time to do...

CLEVE

We'll discuss this at home.

CRIO

But dad.

CLEVE

I said we would discuss this at home. Let's go.

(CLEVE crosses to door and holds it open. CRIO crosses over to the enclosure and pets the animal)

CRIO

Bye little thing. Funny little thing. Stay here, now. No more escaping.

CAL

Think about what I said, Crio. Maybe see ya 'round.

CRIO

Yeah. Maybe. Bye.

(CRIO exits and CLEVE stops a moment at the threshold, exchanges a look with CAL. CLEVE exits. CAL sits down, exhausted and, as CLEVE shuts the door CAL lifts a middle finger to the doorway. Lights out)

END SCENE

ACT TWO, SCENE THREE

(Family kitchen later that evening. CLEVE and CRIO are arguing about taking the job. ANDRAVEDA is standing in the open doorway, looking outside)

CLEVE

Absolutely not. I'm not going to let any daughter of mine work over there for that, that...

CRIO

What? That what?

CLEVE

Crio, don't argue with me. That just isn't a person or a place you need to be hanging around.

CRIO

Shouldn't I get a job? At least for the summer? Isn't that what most kids my age do?

CLEVE

You need to be here. There's plenty of work here.

CRIO

Not for pay. Not for college money.

CLEVE

Well, then, go into town and work at some store or something.

CRIO

Oh, it's okay if I go twelve miles into town and work somewhere for someone you don't even know, but I can't work for our neighbor down the road, the neighbor who helped us out after Dole died.

CLEVE

Crio...

CRIO

No, dad. She helped us, now we help her. That's how it's supposed to work, isn't it? Isn't that the "culture" of this place?

CLEVE

See, that. That right there.

CRIO

What?

CLEVE

You've been around that person for exactly, what, one hour? And you're already as disobedient and smart-alecky as I've ever known. You want more responsibility? Fine. You got it. Especially now since the Service is on our ass, thanks to you. Your place is right here. Help clean up the mess you made. If you think you should have an allowance - well, we can talk about that.

CRIO

An allowance? I'm not in grade school, dad. I've graduated high school, early in fact. And you know what? No one even noticed. Mom, I can forgive. She's kinda, well... But you? Never said "congratulations" or "good job" or anything about it. Just nothing. No! No don't say anything now, it's too late. It didn't occur to you when it mattered, so just don't bother now.

CLEVE

Alright. That's not important...

(During the following, subtle sounds indicate a shift in weather. Wind picks up, we see it in Andraveda's hair and clothing. Very faint thunder begins to be heard, lights shift)

CRIO

YES, it is important. I'm important. I'm smart, dad. I finished high school practically on my own and I'm looking at colleges. Don't you get it? I'm going to go away soon. I won't be here to do chores or watch mom, or heat up your meals, any of it.

CLEVE

Things have changed, Crio.

CRIO

That's right, they have. So why do you keep trying to keep things like they were?

CLEVE

What are you talking about?

CRIO

You just go on as if nothing's happened out there. Like the whole system isn't busted. Cal says...

CLEVE

Oh, "Cal says". Look, I don't have time for this.

CRIO

When, then? When will you have time for this?

CLEVE

Don't start with that. Nothing's busted!

CRIO

Nothing's busted? Are you serious? You know the wells are going dry...

CLEVE

Crio, you're only sixteen. You believe stuff you're told because, well, you don't know better. People like Cal, full of nonsense.

CRIO

She has a Ph.D! She says the Service will have to say the water is...

CLEVE

Damn Cal, damn the Service, and damn the whole government. Lemme tell you something, Crio, the government isn't in charge of the water. God is.

(CRIO reacts to this)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Fine. You don't respect our values anymore, fine. Do you think you have someplace else to go, or some way to survive? You have no idea what it takes out there. None. You're spoiled. You never have understood this place, but now you want to go do chores for "Cal".

(During this ANDRAVEDA comes into the room and listens. Subtle storm cues continue)

CRIO

Oh, is that it? You don't like her so I can't work for her?

CLEVE

I don't like that she lied to us about who she is.

CRIO

She didn't lie.

CLEVE

Yeah, she did. Parading around like she was a man all these years. No wonder no one ever saw her up close.

CRIO

She isn't "parading around". You always complained how you never saw Cal at church, he never had morning coffee at the diner... how is that parading around?

CLEVE

Okay, I can't win with you. You may not work for Cal at "her" farm. I don't know anything about what's going on down there, or what sort of...freak show she's running.

CRIO

Freak show? Dad, she's got some really rare...

CLEVE

Do not tell me what she's got. I know more than I care to, after taking a good long look at one of her stock today. If that ain't a freak show...

CRIO

I meant she is sick, she needs my help.

CLEVE

Veda's sick. I need your help.

CRIO

I can do both.

CLEVE

No, Crio. I won't allow it. That's final. You want chores? Go do the chores you are supposed to be doing around here.

(CRIO stands motionless)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

GO!

(CRIO exits out the front door passing ANDRAVEDA)

ANDRAVEDA

Why are you shouting at that girl?

CLEVE

That girl? Don't you know who that is?

ANDRAVEDA

Yes.

CLEVE

Who? Tell me, Andraveda. Tell me who that is.

ANDRAVEDA

Someone.

CLEVE

Someone?

ANDRAVEDA

Someone you don't like very much.

CLEVE

Veda, that's our daughter. Our daughter, Crio.

ANDRAVEDA

And you shout at her.

CLEVE

Well right now I'm about to shout at everyone...

(CLEVE'S phone goes off. He looks at it.)

CLEVE

Dammit. I gotta talk to them. Veda, just, just stay put.

(CLEVE answers his phone)

CLEVE

Hello? Yes, yes this is he. Yes. Can I ask what this is about? Well, alright, we can discuss it tomorrow. Sure, sure. I'll be here, so...oh. You'll just... no, no you won't. My land, you'll

CLEVE (CONT'D)

wait for me. You better not. I better not find you anywhere on my property without my... fine. You come to the house first. That's a real good idea.

(ends phone call)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

And here they come. That was the damn Service. They think they can just...well. They're not getting this place, they're not. I'll burn it to the ground before...Veda? Veda?

(CLEVE looks for ANDRAVEDA but doesn't see her. She is standing in the door way watching him look for her)

CLEVE

For the love of god why won't she stay put? And leaving this damn door open.

(ANDRAVEDA steps into the room, but CLEVE brushes past her through the doorway)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Veda! Crio! Crio, have you seen your mom?

(From off)

CRIO

No, not down here.

CLEVE

Get up here, will you?

(CLEVE closes door and charges around the room, organizing papers. ANDRAVEDA stands off to one side. CRIO enters)

CRIO

Now what's going on?

CLEVE

Close that, another storm rolling in. For one, I can't find your mother again, and it seems the Service would like to speak with me first thing tomorrow on some little matter that came to their attention. Is that enough?

CRIO

Oh.

CLEVE

Yes, "oh". So, do you think you can find your mother?

CRIO

Sure.

CLEVE

Then do that. I've got to try and find all that legal crap before the Service marches in here... think they can just...by god...

(CLEVE exits to another part of the house. CRIO stands for a moment)

CRIO

Mom?

(Then, to herself)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Mom, where do you go?

(CRIO looks around and exits outside)

ANDRAVEDA

Who?

(ANDRAVEDA is left alone on stage. She looks at her hands, looks at herself. She moves about the room, picking things up and putting them down. CLEVE re-enters on a hunt for documents. He walks past ANDRAVEDA, who reaches out to him but he doesn't notice her. He opens drawers and rifles through papers)

ANDRAVEDA

Who are you?

(CRIO enters)

CLEVE

Any luck?

CRIO

No. Now I'm really worried. Why would she wander off...wait, maybe I know. Maybe I know where she is. Dad, I gotta take the mini.

CLEVE

You what?

CRIO

I'll be back as fast as I can...

CLEVE

Crio. Crio, you come back here. Don't you go out there with a storm brewing up...

(CRIO exits. ANDRAVEDA follows her, stops in the threshold of the doorway for a moment, looks around)

ANDRAVEDA

I'll go with her. With her.

(Lights fade on ANDRAVEDA until she is no longer visible to audience. CLEVE stands alone studying the papers in his hand)

ACT TWO, SCENE FOUR

(Lights up on CRIO in the pasture searching for her mom. There continues to be lightning and thunder increasing in intensity)

CRIO

Mom! Mom, are you out here?

(ANDRAVEDA appears at a distance. She is primarily visible in the flashes of lightning)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Mom! Mom is that you? What are you doing? Wait, come back. Mom?

(CRIO crosses to the spot where she saw ANDRAVEDA, but the spot is now vacant. A strong lightning flash and instant loud thunder, indicating the storm is upon her)

CRIO

Jeez. Mom we can't stay out here. You gotta come back with me! Mom!

(Another close lightning strike)

CRIO

Mom! Where are you?

(ANDRAVEDA appears right next to CRIO. A subtle roaring, like an oncoming freight train can be heard. The sound of pelting hail. CRIO reacts to getting hit with hail stones)

CRIO

Mom? Ow. Please mom, please come back with me.

(ANDRAVEDA touches CRIO who flinches as though it is the hail hitting her)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Ow! Shit, that's hail. Ow.

(There is another very bright flash of lightning which illuminates another shape. It is the animal from CAL's. The roaring intensifies. CRIO sees the animal in the flash of light)

CRIO (CONT'D)

God, I can't stay out here any longer. Mom, please. I think there's a tornado! We can't...

(The animal moves to CRIO and begins to nudge her)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Wait, what... what do you want? We gotta get out of this...yes...

(CRIO forces herself to leave with the animal. A continuous roar that is very pronounced is heard as ANDRAVEDA stands with her arms outstretched to the sky)

END SCENE

ACT TWO, SCENE FIVE

(Back at CAL'S interior. CAL is seated at desk with head down on table top. A loud knocking on door wakes her.)

CAL

What? Who the hell is that?

(from off)

CRIO

Me. It's Crio. Please let me in.

CAL

What the hell...

(CAL gets up and crosses to door, opening it. CRIO and the animal enter with a gust of wind)

CRIO

Thanks, I'm sorry. I just...

CAL

Get in, get in. Good god. That a tornado? Get down, get down. Damn you Double Aught...

(They all hunker down under the table)

CAL (CONT'D)

What the hell where you doing out there in the first place?

CRIO

Looking for my mom. We can't find her. I thought...

(Tornado roar peaks and begins to soften. As the sound dies away the CAL and CRIO warily come out from under the table. CAL walks the animal to her enclosure, then goes to the door to the herd and checks on them while talking to CRIO)

CAL

You get your tail back in there and stay put. It's okay kids. We survived it. One, two, three...

(CAL counts noses from the doorway. The animal makes a noise from her enclosure. CRIO goes to her)

CRIO

Hey, it's all over. All gone. Thanks for finding me. Are they all okay?

CAL

Yes. Don't worry about them, what in the hell were you doing out in that?

CRIO

My mom. Well, I could've sworn I saw mom right out there. But then she just...

CAL

What?

CRIO

She just wasn't. Like she was there, but then vanished. And then the critter was there...

CAL

She has figured out every single latch I put on that gate. Damn it. Out in that.

CRIO

I thought the lightning was playing tricks on me. I would see my mom, then not...

CAL

Here. Sit down.

CRIO

We just can't find her, and it got so bad out there. It hurt, I think I'm bruised...

CAL

Yeah, I know. Just sit for a second.

CRIO

But I can't just leave her out there.

CAL

Still lightning. You can look for her after it clears off.

CRIO

But...

CAL

Just take a minute. Then you can look. She's probably right now in your barn or something, she'd be laughing at you in the hail, don't you bet? Out in that storm. It'll be alright.

CRIO

I was so scared. I just can't stop shaking.

CAL

Yeah. So, uh... here. Let me get you something.

(CAL opens a drawer, takes out a flask, pours CRIO a drink)

CRIO

Oh, I don't drink.

CAL

Sure, I know. Just a sip. Calm you down. You don't have to drink it all.

(CRIO takes a sip, makes a face)

CRIO

Ick.

CAL

Yeah. Well, I'll finish what you don't want. Better?

CRIO

A little. I'm sorry, I just had a scare. Your herd really okay?

CAL

Yeah, fine. Just a little wet. Won't hurt 'em.

CRIO

Good. Sorry to bother you. Guess I thought maybe...

CAL

Maybe what?

CRIO

Oh, maybe mom was here or something. Sorry to bother you.

CAL

You apologize too much. And don't say "sorry" to that.

CRIO

Okay. I won't.

CAL

You can hang out here until the lightning stops at least. Be a pretty dangerous walk home.

CRIO

Yeah, but...

CAL

Do what you want. Anyway, thanks for bringing Double Aught in.

CRIO

Double Aught?

CAL

Her designation. Well, they all have a number, but since she keeps getting out and threatening the whole operation I'm just calling her Double Aught. Double zeroes for her.

CRIO

Well, maybe she needs more turnout or something. Can't she at least be with the others?

CAL

Quarantine. Ten days.

CRIO

Oh. But she can be walked around can't she? Hand walked?

CAL

Mmmm, well maybe. If I had someone around to do that.

(silence)

CAL (CONT'D)

So you still think you might want to work here? Manage to talk your old man into it?

CRIO

I might not care what he thinks at this point.

CAL

Sure. Well, how about I fill you in on what goes on here, while that storm clears off. That way you can decide if it's what you want to do.

(CAL brings up a chair and pours herself a large whiskey)

CRIO

Should you drink that? You're sick and all...

CAL

At this point... well, let me tell you about the farm here, then we can talk about me.

So. We use these animals for organ transplantation.

CRIO

You what?

CAL

I am lead geneticist for a pharmaceutical company. Called GenFarms; heard of 'em?

CRIO

No. I don't think so.

CAL

Doesn't matter. Anyway, I have charge of this facility, which houses...sorry, sound like I'm giving the elevator speech. Basically, Crio, we harvest their organs for human transplantation.

CRIO

Eew. That's awful.

CAL

Is it? You eat that beef you raise?

CRIO

Yeah.

CAL

Same thing.

CRIO

Doesn't seem like it.

CAL

Well that's the big hurdle, isn't it? It's okay to eat 'em, but not insert 'em.

CRIO

How, how do you, um...

CAL

Well, we don't, "um..." here. Send them to a facility up north for that part. They can't have any drugs in 'em so they have to be...

CRIO

Oh god, don't say it. They're bolted.

CAL

A version of that, yes.

CRIO

Oh, god.

CAL

Not pretty, I know. But you have a beef herd...

CRIO

And I've always hated it. My dad thinks I'm useless as a farm kid because I hate what we do. I mean in the end, what we do.

CAL

Yep. We pretty much suck.

CRIO

But how come...oh, never mind.

CAL

What? Don't hesitate, ask exactly what you want to know.

CRIO

I mean, how come animal organs are used? I thought there was a rejection problem with animal organ transplants.

CAL

There 'ya go. Knew you were smart enough. Yes, can be.

CRIO

And pigs. I thought it was always pigs.

CAL

Often is.

CRIO

So what, what exactly are these little guys?

CAL

And here it comes. These little guys, and they're actually gals, are equids.

CRIO

Horses. No they're not, they're so little and... Oh. You mean..my mom was right? They're throwbacks?

CAL

Yep.

CRIO

How? How is that even possible?

CAL

That is the big question, isn't it. Well, it wasn't exactly intended.

CRIO

No?

CAL

No, we were, at least I was, trying to engineer back to a smaller sized equid, yes, but not a pre-modern horse. The primitivity just started happening. I wasn't surprised by the barring on the legs and coat, but the other things...

CRIO

Weird feet, you mean?

CAL

Oh those toes, yes. And they can't eat grass or hay, after they're weaned. They have to have a special leaf based diet, which is a pain. It was Double Aught, and so you know, she's actually the oldest of the group; been the surrogate for almost all of them, and she was the one.

CRIO

The one what?

CAL

Figured it out.

CRIO

What'd she do?

CAL

Well, I had been keeping them going on a ginkgo leaf formula I devised. But what a butt load of work that was. It was tricky and they weren't doing all that great on it, anyway. She, the clever thing, got out one day and disappeared. She stayed alive out there, on her own, for almost a month. When I finally found her - alive, to my endless surprise - she looked wonderful and was healthier than any of them. Got over the fences and moved onto your property and had been eating that plant overgrowth you all are fussing over. And she managed to find the spring water on your place so, sorry about that, but now and then she's been squatting on your place.

CRIO

So she's been off this property before?

CAL

Oh, yes. A real escape artist. And every time to get to your side of the fences. Grass is always greener, I guess.

CRIO

Well, she's back now, so it's okay.

CAL

Uh, not really. According to the protocols, she has to be destroyed...

CRIO

No.

CAL

Well, yes. And on the official records she has been. She actually doesn't exist. Not on the books, anyway.

CRIO

You're falsifying reports?

CAL

Yes. Yes I am.

CRIO

Why? Why would you do that?

CAL

Because I need her alive, but off the books.

CRIO

Because...

(CAL gets up, walks with some difficulty away from CRIO)

CAL

Because I need her blood.

CRIO

Her blood.

CAL

For cloning. Well, I can't use mine anymore.

CRIO

What are you saying?

CAL

Okay. So this is where it gets a little weird.

CRIO

It's already pretty weird, Cal.

CAL

Right. So hang on. It gets, well, complicated. So, if you know something about organ transplantation, which it seems you do, you know that tissue rejection is a major problem.

CRIO

Yes. Studied this a little in my biology course.

CAL

Right, and that's where you got the idea about pigs being used for this.

CRIO

Yes. At least that's what we were taught.

CAL

And for many decades that was true. But there was a big problem using pigs.

CRIO

Rejection?

CAL

Well, yes, the human body might reject the organ, but the bigger problem was the human ego.

CRIO

Ego?

CAL

Yep. Bunch of rich white guys having heart attacks and liver failure. You tell them they're getting a pig heart and they make a face. But when you tell them they can have the heart of a horse...

CRIO

Oh. I can see that. But a horse's heart...

CAL

Would be much too big, of course. But this is a bunch of egomaniacs and for a lot of stupid reasons it doesn't occur to them that a horse heart wouldn't fit. Recipients are mostly all men. They figure they can take it.

CRIO

Jeez.

CAL

Well, and to be fair, there are other problems. There's a whole raft of people who won't take pig organs no matter what.

CRIO

Why?

CAL

What do you think? Jews and Muslims. They have pretty strict prohibitions against cloven hoofed animals. Ask a wealthy Saudi if he's okay having the heart of a pig.

CRIO

Oh.

CAL

Or Jews. Major legal battles over it. But if the organ can come from a horse? Done. No law-suits, just a happy Kosher yes. Horse equals power in almost all cultures. So we developed a horse - small, kinda weird - but still genetically a horse with a perfectly sized horse heart, and Ka-ching. We got product.

CRIO

God. But, how are you doing this at all? Don't horse organs get rejected just like a pigs, no matter size?

CAL

Well. You think fast. And that, that's a good question. We - that is to say I - developed a method to limit the rejection problem.

CRIO

Ok...?

CAL

Using human genetic material.

CRIO

Human genetic...?

CAL

I used my own blood for sequencing. Human genetic material.

CRIO

Oh. So, wait. That makes these...you're saying these are, what, part human? They have human blood?

CAL

No, not that they have human blood, exactly. Their RNA is manipulated so my DNA can be used.

CRIO

RNA? I thought DNA was...

CAL

Okay, there. That is what is wrong with general education. DNA is a code, damn it. Useless really, without a translator. RNA translates that code into proteins, which...

(CAL becomes exhausted and has to sit back down)

CAL (CONT'D)

Okay, sorry. Not trying to rant at you. That doesn't matter. What matters is that you understand what you're getting into, if you decide to help here.

These animals are actually transpecies. They are part human.

(CRIO stands up)

CAL (CONT'D)

Quite a bit, in fact. And it works. Horse chromosomal number sequences are so close to humans that, well. It works.

CRIO

They're like, hybrids.

CAL

Yes. Hybrids with enough human genetic markers that tissue rejection is essentially eliminated. But it also means we have to kind of keep it off the public's mind. It freaks people out. Especially religious people.

CRIO

Like us. My family. We're religious people.

CAL

Yes, I know. And you are freaked out.

CRIO

Yes. Yes I am.

CAL

But hey, "GenFarms; Saving Human Lives Everyday", right?

CRIO

I guess.

CAL

And isn't that what's most important? Human lives uber alles?

CRIO

But if they are part human...?

CAL

Oh yes. There is the sticking point. The threshold. How much human is too much human?

(CAL rises and crosses to window)

CAL (CONT'D)

Listen, here's the thing. I'm wearing out, Crio. And I can't fight that new battle, the one over animal rights, percentage of human DNA...all of it. We've stopped cloning for now because I can't use my blood anymore because... well, I'm sick.

CRIO

Yeah, I get that. Do you know what's wrong?

CAL

Cancer process.

CRIO

Oh, god!

CAL

Yeah, well, get used to it, honey. We all gonna get cancer. Just some of us already have it.

(CAL takes a big swig of whiskey, waving away any objection from CRIO)

CAL (CONT'D)

Anyway, here's the thing, no matter what it is, I can't go in for any sort of treatment if I have to keep using my own blood for them. Can't do chemo, can't do radiation...

CRIO

Of course. That would contaminate the sample.

CAL

Exactly. And as of yet, using Double Aught's isn't working. She's been the perfect surrogate, perfect for implantation. Great mom, never rejects a foal. But her blood, no success. Seems the process needs one hundred percent human blood.

(CRIO puts down her half full glass of whiskey and walks over to the doorway between where she is and the herd is. She opens the door and looks out at them)

CRIO

So you need me to do more than clean out stalls and fill water tanks.

CAL

Yes.

CRIO

You need blood.

CAL

Yes.

Does the type matter? CRIO

No. CAL

A lot of blood? CRIO

No more than a normal blood draw in a doctor's office.
(CRIO is silent for a long moment)

The storm has passed. I need to go find my mom. CRIO

I understand. CAL
(CRIO closes the door on the animals and begins to leave)

But, Crio. CAL (CONT'D)

Yes? CRIO

Can I count on you to keep this quiet? There's nothing illegal here. It's all in line with state and federal regulations. It's just that communities can get... CAL

Freaked out. CRIO

Right. CAL

Except you're lying about her. Double Aught. CRIO

Yes. Well, if you're willing and available, then I don't need her for... CAL

CRIO

No! Here's the deal, if I do this, and I'm not saying I will, but if I do, she lives. She doesn't get bolted, she doesn't get shot at. She lives. Understand?

CAL

Ok. Understand.

CRIO

Thanks.

CRIO (CONT'D)

And thanks for letting me in...

CAL

Sure. No problem. Stay safe out there.

(CRIO nods and exits. CAL looks at Double Aught watching her from the enclosure)

CAL

What are you looking at?

(CAL picks up the glass of whiskey CRIO left)

CAL (CONT'D)

I don't know how you do it. I really don't. But once again, you've managed to survive.

Well, keep it up little one, 'cause you and yours gonna be what's left of the human race.

(CAL raises the glass in a salute to the animal, and downs the drink.
Black Out)

END SCENE

ACT TWO, SCENE SIX

(Lights up on farm kitchen. It is a few weeks later. CLEVE is sitting at the table reading a Bible. CRIO enters)

Dad.

CRIO

You found her?

CLEVE

No. Dad. There's no news. Nothing. Dad, we should talk. The Service...

CRIO

No. It's only been a week or so.

CLEVE

It's been four. Four weeks.

CRIO

Four?

CLEVE

They've used the sniffer dogs, volunteers have been out combing the area on foot. Dad...

CRIO

NO! We'll find her. We will.

CLEVE

Ok. Okay. We aren't giving up. It's just, the Service...

CRIO

FUCK them!

CLEVE

Dad!

CRIO

I just can't talk to those people. Crio, you talk to them. Can you talk to them?

CLEVE

Sure, dad. I am. I have been, and they've been understanding about the storm, and mom, well, understanding for them anyway. But, I have an idea...

CLEVE

No. We aren't turning this place into a pumping station. Never. Crio, my head is splitting. I'm going to go lie down for a minute. You just make the Service leave this place alone. Tell them to just leave me alone.

(CLEVE exits. CRIO stands for a minute, walks to the front door and opens it and stands in the doorway looking out, just as her mother had. She pulls out her cell phone and dials. During this call CLEVE reenters to retrieve his bible. He listens)

CRIO

Cal? It's Crio. It's time. Yes, we're ready. Yep, I've told the Service and it's done. He'll sign. Hey, send Double Aught first, she knows where the spring is. Then the rest. They'll follow her. Great. Hey, Cal, good luck. Let me know how it goes for you, okay? Yeah, I'm sure. Let 'em on through. All of them.

Thanks.

(CRIO ends call)

CLEVE

Crio?

(CRIO turns)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

Shut that door, will you? You'll let all that heat in...

CRIO

Yeah. Dad, I've got to tell you something.

(CRIO closes door and crosses to CLEVE)

CRIO (CONT'D)

You need to listen to me.

CLEVE

I'm too tired.

CRIO

No, no you're not. Dad, I have a plan to keep the farm from the Service, but you have to agree. Your name is on everything, not mine, so you have to sign the papers.

CLEVE

Crio, this can wait...

CRIO

No, it can't. Dad, the Service has been as patient as they will be. We gotta move on this deal, Dad. This is the way to keep the farm a family farm, run it pretty much like we always have. But we can't sit on this any longer. Will you please listen to me?

CLEVE

Crio, you're just a girl...

CRIO

GODDAM it, no, I'm not. I'm not "just" anything.

CLEVE

Don't you dare take the Lord's name...

CRIO

I'll take anything I damn well please. I am the one who has been handling the search for Mom, I'm the one who has figured out a way to save this place, but you're too busy wallowing in your own piss to notice.

CRIO (CONT'D)

Now you listen to me and for once, stop fighting me. Just do what I tell you. You want to maintain the family farm, right? Keep your sacred traditions? Well here it is and this is what it takes: we are taking over Cal's deal. She has to leave for treatment so we are taking over her operation. Yes. Those weird little critters are moving onto our land as we speak. YES they are. They will do fine on our place. Genfarms will pay us...sit down and listen...Genfarms will pay us a lot of money AND keep the Service at bay. We just have to keep those animals going. We will have enough to pay the bills, keep the search for mom going, all of it.

CLEVE

The Service won't back off.

CRIO

Oh no? You should see them grovel. Genfarms has that kind of political clout; the Service has reversed itself on the new wells, at least for now. And the little ones, the critters, dad, they're such easy keepers. If they have access to our water and that creeping fern, they're golden. So, that's the deal. We go into biotech; we keep the place. Dad. I've told them yes.

END SCENE

ACT TWO, SCENE SEVEN

(It is one year later. CRIO is at the table working on her laptop. CLEVE enters through the front door carrying a cardboard box in both arms. As the door opens sounds of protests and chanting can be heard from a distance)

CLEVE

Damn assholes. Better stay off the property, that's all I can say.

CRIO

Anything?

(CLEVE pulls two shoes out of the box and bangs them on the table in front of CRIO)

CLEVE

Her shoes. All they've ever found are her shoes. Cold case they said. State has closed it. They're done.

(CRIO makes a "tsk" sound)

CLEVE

It's God's will, Crio.

CRIO

God's will? Are you serious? That is such bull crap!

CLEVE

Don't you say that. Don't you ever say that. God took her, that's all. A miracle. Right from the fields and up to heaven. That's His right to do. Took her to be with Dole. It's where she wanted to be, Crio, and God granted that for her.

CRIO

Oh, come on. Now I think you have gone over the edge.

CLEVE

It's what I believe. You can believe or not as you see fit.

CRIO

Does it comfort you, to tell yourself that sort of nonsense?

CLEVE

It isn't nonsense, Crio. What else could this be but the hand of God? There's been nothing; no body, no sign, just these old shoes of hers and she's just gone.

(CRIO sits down next to CLEVE. They sit in silence for a moment. CRIO suddenly weeps, CLEVE comforts her. She recovers and wipes at her eyes)

CRIO

Yeah. I guess that must be it. All the rational alternatives are just too... so sure, you bet. God took her on up to heaven to be with

(CLEVE and CRIO say the name of DOLE simultaneously)

CRIO (CONT'D)
Dole!

CLEVE
Dole.

CLEVE
What about Dole?

CRIO
Oh, just why she was out there that night. Dad, I never told you this because I was afraid you'd think she was nuts.

CLEVE
Tell me what?

CRIO
Mom told me she went down to the south pasture if it stormed because, well she said it was because she could see Dole there. I know, I know it's crazy, right? And I told her not to, it was dangerous. But - that night, of the storm. I think she was out there waiting for Dole. I could of sworn I saw her but then, she was just gone.

(CLEVE nods)

CLEVE
She blamed herself, you know.

CRIO
For...?

CLEVE
For his death. She blamed herself. Told me so, when she was still in the hospital. She had reached for him just when the lightning hit. She felt it jump from her to him. Never really got over that. She told me. She said she killed him.

CRIO
I never knew that.

CLEVE
I know.

CRIO

So that's why. That's why she went there. She wanted to be near him. To ask forgiveness. But it's okay, now, isn't it? And they're together now, aren't they? Right now - don't you bet? Oh, they're laughing at us crying down here. 'Cause they've got it made. All that sky, filled with sunshine, lots of sweet cool air...and...time. They've got all the time in the world.

(CLEVE puts his arm around CRIO. They sit for a moment. A sudden outburst from the protestors outside is heard. CRIO'S phone rings. She looks at it and picks up)

CRIO

Hi, what just happened? The gang sure got excited down there. Dr. Willit, who is..? Oh, oh, Cal. Really? Okay. Sure, I guess so. Thanks.

(Ends call)

CRIO (CONT'D)

It's Cal, dad. She's here.

CLEVE

Why?

CRIO

Not sure. But could you go down and meet her? I'll clear a spot for us.

(CLEVE nods and exits. CRIO removes the shoes and box from table, clears a place for company to sit, then returns to her laptop, rapidly typing. After a moment CLEVE returns with CAL. She is wearing a scarf which covers her now bald head. Sounds of protests and chanting can be heard from outside. CLEVE opens the screen door and they enter)

CAL

Hey, Crio.

(CRIO looks up from her laptop but goes back to typing)

CRIO

Cal! Pardon me, I mean, Doctor Willit. Just a sec...

CAL

Oh, never mind the "Doctor" crap. Cal's fine.

(CRIO quickly finishes her typing, gets up, crosses to the screen door, opens it)

CRIO

Well, come on in. Sorry, had a thing, there.

CAL

That's a lot, going on down there.

CLEVE

Yeah, gettin' worse by the day. I'm gonna go back down and keep an eye on things. Good to see you Cal.

CAL

Yeah, you too.

(CLEVE exits)

CAL (CONT'D)

Looks like a military action. Couple squad cars. Your dad is armed to the teeth.

CRIO

Yeah, if dad could build a wall around the place, he would. We've got conservation activists, property rights activists, media, and a few plain nut jobs. The water wars have started, Cal.

CAL

Sooner than I thought.

CRIO

What you doing here?

CAL

Like to sit if I could.

CRIO

Sure, of course, here, come over and sit down.

(CAL crosses to chair which CRIO offers and sits carefully, obviously weak)

CAL

Sucks to be sick. Avoid it if you can.

CRIO

Yes. I can get you some water, if you want.

CAL

That's pretty funny, considering all that out there, but thanks, please. Only if you can spare some.

(CRIO crosses to kitchen area and gets water)

CAL (CONT'D)

They're angry about more than water, though, saw the signs. What do they know?

CRIO

Oh, townies. It's going around we're keeping exotics here, and some people aren't happy with us.

(CRIO brings water to CAL and sits with her)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Misuse of the available water and all. Don't know how you kept the operation quiet as long as you did.

CAL

Thanks. I spread lies around. And I kept to myself.

CRIO

Well, dad. He's needed his church and diner crowd. Mom and all...

CAL

Sure. Well, people are easy to fool, so I suggest lies. Lots of lies.

CRIO

Yes. So, what brings you back here?

CAL

Needed to see, well you, everybody. How's it been here?

CRIO

Okay.

CAL

And the herd?

CRIO

They're good.

CAL

Genfarms keeping you busy?

CRIO

Not really been hearing much from Genfarms. Not since, what, a month or two ago?

I see.

(silence)

And what about Double Aught?

Well, yes, she's still here. Why?

There's been some legal trouble.

Yeah?

Lawsuits. Crio, Genfarms is planning on shutting down this operation.

(CRIO is silent)

All property has to go on the market.

But...

All property. It's no good, Crio. Look, I'm sorry but you won't be able to keep Double Aught here. They know she's alive.

How do they know?

There's been a lot of backlash to the transgenic work. It seems patients weren't as "fully informed" as they should have been. People are just...

Freaked out. But how do they know about her?

I had to testify in court, and I just... I couldn't afford to lose my position with Genfarms, my insurance. So...

(CRIO stands)

CRIO

You told them.

CAL

I had to tell the court, Crio, yes.

(CRIO crosses to her computer, stands looking at the monitor, then keys something in)

CRIO

How much time have we got?

CAL

Well...

(CRIO taps one key on the keyboard. Looks at CAL)

CRIO

How much time, Cal? Don't dink around with me. Days? Hours? What?

CAL

Maybe a week. Hell, they should talk to you. I'm doing this off the record.

CRIO

Your favorite thing to do.

CAL

Look, I'm just here to tell you. Thought you should hear it from me, is all, before...well, before much longer. The transpecies thing has fallen apart, so? You raise something else here.

CRIO

What happens to them, to Double Aught?

CAL

Genfarms might try to sell the animals, but if I know them, what's left of the herd'll just be a loss. A mysterious loss. Drowning, brushfire, whatever.

CRIO

God. After all this.

CAL

I know, I'm sorry. Wish I could help, but that's reality. Animals are property and in this case, also intellectual property. They will be disposed of in the most profitable way. It's just business.

CRIO

Just business. Really.

CAL

I haven't much influence anymore, especially not now. Well, after the litigation. Doesn't matter, actually. Crio, I'm not, I'm not gonna make it.

CRIO

Not gonna... oh. But, the treatment...

CAL

Buys time. Not cures. I've just been buying time with treatment. Enough time to "get things in order" as they like to say. One of those things is this.

CRIO

Oh. I'm sorry.

CAL

Yeah. Try not to think about it.

(CAL finishes the water in her glass)

CAL (CONT'D)

I just needed to see to some things. See how you were doing, of course, but also to tell you. And apologize.

CRIO

Apologize? You? To me?

CAL

Didn't mean you. I meant them. Mostly Double Aught. Need to say I'm sorry.

CRIO

Oh. Like what, absolution?

CAL

What?

CRIO

Absolution. When you've sinned and want forgiveness, you confess and then ask for absolution.

CAL

Oh. Sure, then. I guess so.

CRIO

Would you like more water? Wash away those sins?

CAL

Cute. Yes. Please.

(CRIO takes CAL's empty glass and goes up to kitchen area)

CAL (CONT'D)

Absolution. Is that a real thing?

CRIO

My dad thinks so.

CAL

All through the chemo, every time I shut my eyes, I would see hers, all of theirs, but mostly hers. Sending her babies off to be...she was such a good mom. She loved them so. I always thought she knew. Knew what we were doing.

(CRIO returns with water)

CAL (CONT'D)

I would like to see her one more time before I die, is all. To know she's here, and at least that she's been okay. Can I see her? She in the barn?

CRIO

Sure. Why don't I see if dad can go get her for you?

CAL

Bring her up here?

CRIO

Sure. Be easier than you having to hike down there. Why not? I'll call dad.

(CRIO dials. CAL looks at her water)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Dad? Hey, could you do something for me? No, just wondering, would you go get Double Aught and bring her up here? Yes to the house. Cal, uh, Cal would like to see her, but, well that's a bit of a trek...

CAL

No, I can...

(CRIO waves away CAL's objection)

CRIO

Well, can't the *sheriff* guard the fort for just a minute? Yes, it is important. Okay. Thanks. Thanks, dad.

(CRIO ends call)

CRIO (CONT'D)

He'll do it. Might fuss a little, but he'll do it.

CAL

I could've gone to... well, I appreciate that. I do.

CRIO

Hey, know what I still have? That bottle you left...where is that?

(CRIO moves around the room, searching)

CAL

What bottle? The whiskey? You kept that?

(CRIO finds the whiskey)

CRIO

Found it. Want some?

CAL

No. By which I mean, yes. It'll probably make me vomit, but hell, yes.

CRIO

Comin' up.

(CRIO goes to kitchen area, pulls two glasses out and pours whiskey into them.
Gives one to CAL)

CRIO (CONT'D)

Cheers.

CAL

You drinking now?

CRIO

Just today.

(CAL drinks, CRIO sips)

CRIO

Okay. Still ick.

(CRIO puts her glass down but CAL enjoys her taste of whiskey)

CRIO (CONT'D)

So, I have a question.

CAL

Shoot.

CRIO

How long do they live?

CAL

Who?

CRIO

Double Aught. How long do you think she'll live? Naturally I mean, if Genfarms doesn't get to her.

CAL

Don't really know.

(CAL studies CRIO for a moment)

CAL (CONT'D)

The thing is, Crio, they're Genfarms' property, legally. You have to abide by...

CRIO

Genfarms property. Sure. Do you know the last time we were paid? Do you?

CAL

No, I wouldn't... they aren't paying you?

CRIO

Not for three months now. Won't respond to emails, phone calls, texts, nothing. How long am I supposed to keep this operation going for them, for free?

(CAL mutters to herself)

CAL

It's becoming the damn Soviet Union.

CRIO

I bet that's pretty funny, and I might get that remark, IF I HAD GONE TO COLLEGE. But I didn't. I stayed here and worked a good job in biotech for an international genetics firm, didn't I? Well as far as I can tell that was a joke. They're filing for a bankruptcy thing.

CAL

You do know about it, then.

CRIO

Been watching news feeds. I can't pretend I know that much about bankruptcy, but they have creditors, right?

CAL

Yes.

CRIO

And the herd is property, you said. That makes them an asset. Unless they all "oops" die, you said. Then they're an insurance claim. Genfarms is hoping for that? Or maybe even planning an unexplained "event"? And maybe me and dad, well if we don't make it out of the burning barn...

(CLEVE appears at the screen door with DOUBLE AUGHT)

CRIO (CONT'D)

And it'd all be just to save the corporation's owners a few dollars on a business deal.

(CRIO sees CLEVE and goes to screen door, opens it. CLEVE enters leading DOUBLE AUGHT who is cautious but enters the house. CAL turns to see her)

CLEVE

Here she is. Crio's kept her nice, healthy.

CRIO

Thanks, dad. See, you can catch her.

CLEVE

This time.

CAL

Well, look at you. Pretty remarkable. You've done a lot with her, Crio. She's so...

(CAL stands but teeters slightly and sits back down. CRIO takes the lead rope from CLEVE and walks DOUBLE AUGHT over to CAL)

CRIO

Here you go. Say hi to Cal, Double Aught.

(The animal noses CAL who pets her. CAL is moved by this reunion. She remains silent as she strokes the animal's head)

CLEVE

Guess she remembers you.

(CAL laughs)

CAL

God, I hope not. I hope I look and smell so different, that...

CRIO

She remembers you. She knows exactly who you are.

(CAL looks at CRIO)

CRIO (CONT'D)

So why don't you ask her?

CAL

Ask her?

CRIO

For absolution. You said you wanted to apologize.

(CAL throws a look at CLEVE)

CLEVE

Crio?

CRIO

Cal said she wanted to apologize. Said she needed absolution. From Double Aught. I'd like to see her get that, if she can.

(CLEVE glances at CAL, who winces)

CLEVE

Sorry, Dr. Willit. Lately Crio can be a little... well, we'd like you to know how careful we've been, following protocols, kept the herd secret...

CAL

It's fine. I did say that. About apologizing.

CRIO

So, tell her. Tell her what you're sorry for.

(CAL looks from CRIO to CLEVE)

CAL

I'm sorry I, we... that we used you the way we did.

CRIO

That it?

CAL

That we took your babies from you. That we...

(CAL breaks at this point. DOUBLE AUGHT moves away from her)

CRIO

That we used your babies for spare parts for wealthy human patients. Patients who are one hundred percent human.

CLEVE

Crio! What are you up to?

CRIO

That we used human DNA to prevent tissue rejection. We used our own blood and made a hybrid human-animal species and used them however we wanted.

CLEVE

Crio, stop it.

CRIO

Oh, did I get something wrong? Isn't that what we did here? What we all did?

(CLEVE's phone goes off. He looks at it, frowns, and clicks it off)

CAL

Why are you doing this?

(CRIO goes to DOUBLE AUGHT and leads her nearer the table with the computer on it)

CRIO

I'm just trying to help you, Dr. Willit. You said you wanted to apologize to her.

CAL

I did. I apologized.

CLEVE

What's gotten into you?

CRIO

You two, you're really exactly alike. You are.

(CRIO leads DOUBLE AUGHT to CLEVE)

CRIO (CONT'D)

You, you think because the bible tells you you have "dominion over the earth", anything you want to do, to anything at anytime, you can.

CLEVE

Don't you dare start to...

(CRIO leads DOUBLE AUGHT to CAL)

CRIO

And you, you think simply because you *can* do a thing means you must do it. Any and all are there for you to experiment on and profit from, one way or another.

(CAL's phone goes off. She ignores it)

CAL

You wanted to this, too, Crio. You wanted to get away from your family, a separate identity.

CRIO

Oh my hands are just as bloody as yours. Double Aught, I need absolution too. I confess that I too, knowingly sent your little ones off to be slaughtered.

CLEVE

Crio, I want you to stop this, right now.

(CLEVE's phone goes off again. He looks at it, clicks it off)

CRIO

I sent the first one off because it was what I was supposed to do. Those were the rules. When they asked for the second one ten days later, I sent her off too. Part of me knew something about it all wasn't right. But I wanted to be professional, be detached, just like you two.

CLEVE

You've never been sensible about these animals.

(CLEVE's phone goes off again. This time he answers it, stepping away from CRIO and CAL)

CLEVE (CONT'D)

What? Can't this wait? What?

CRIO

That's right. I've never been sensible. One by one I let the herd, her herd, go and I thought she knew exactly what was happening to them. But Genfarms didn't know about Double Aught, did they? So I told myself she was safe. As long as I could keep her safe, I said, then it was okay...until now. Now here you are, Cal, and they are asking for her, aren't they? She is next.

CAL

I know you've bonded with her. It's obvious. But Crio, you have to...just because you found her...

CRIO

I didn't find her. She found me.

CAL

Crio.

CLEVE

Something's up. Cal, you getting calls?

(CAL looks at her phone)

CAL

Yes.

CLEVE

Somehow, there's a flood of people demanding to know about the animal in our house. People know you're here, all about the Genfarms deal...

CAL

Oh. I've got a text, wait, what...I'm all over what...? How...?

(CRIO moves herself and DOUBLE AUGHT over to the computer)

CRIO

I left this running. Been webcasting everything that just happened in this room. I have a pretty limited audience, but if it catches on... plus all I have to do to send a link to our local network is...

(CRIO lets her index finger hover over one key on her keyboard)

CAL

Crio, don't!

CLEVE

What are you doing? What is happening?

CAL

Crio, don't send that up!

(CRIO waits a moment, then hits the key)

CRIO

Why don't we go ahead and tell the world the truth about them? In the end we really are God, aren't we? I mean, we can actually *make* them. They can't make us. Dominion over the earth; that's true. We have all this authority. We decide who lives, who dies, and how. All the authority but none of the responsibility? I don't think it works like that. So now, now comes the responsibility.

END SCENE

ACT TWO, SCENE EIGHT

(Lights up on interior of the farm kitchen, now emptied of all furniture and belongings. Voices over loudspeakers from off stage, declaring mandatory evacuation. CLEVE and CRIO enter. CRIO is in a hurry)

CLEVE

One last pass through. Just make sure we got everything. Evacuate in 72 hours...Crio my family has lived here...

CRIO

I know. Look, I'll wait for you outside and keep a watch, but hurry. No fooling, dad, that crew is not gonna wait much longer.

CEVE

Yeah.

CRIO

Yeah, and we gotta go.

CLEVE

Yeah. Just give me a minute, can you?

CRIO

Literally, one minute.

(CRIO exits, leaving the front door open. CLEVE closes the door, then walks through the room. He grieves the loss of the family farm in his way. As he ends his goodbyes he tries to open the front door but the doorknob comes off in his hand. He tries to jimmy the lock but can't do it. He turns and sinks down onto the floor, unable to get out. He stares at the old fashioned door knob in his hand. The sounds of men hollering and equipment gearing up fills the space. CRIO calls from off)

CRIO

Dad! DAD!

(Blackout)

THE END

ALTERNATE ENDING

(Lights up on interior of the farm kitchen, now emptied of all furniture and belongings. Voices over loudspeakers from off stage, declaring mandatory evacuation. CLEVE and CRIO enter. CRIO is in a hurry)

CLEVE

One last pass through. Just make sure we got everything. Evacuate in 72 hours...Crio my family has lived here...

CRIO

I know. Look, I'll wait for you outside and keep a watch, but hurry. No fooling, dad, that crew is not gonna wait much longer.

CEVE

Yeah.

CRIO

Yeah, and we gotta go.

CLEVE

Yeah. Just give me a minute, can you?

CRIO

Literally, one minute.

(CRIO exits, leaving the front door open. CLEVE closes the door, then walks through the room. He grieves the loss of the family farm in his way. As he ends his goodbyes he tries to open the front door but the doorknob comes off in his hand. He tries to jimmy the lock but can't do it. He turns and sinks down onto the floor, unable to get out. He stares at the old fashioned door knob in his hand. The sounds of men hollering and equipment gearing up fills the space. CRIO calls from off)

CRIO

Dad! DAD!

(CRIO forces the lock from the outside, breaking the old door handle again. CRIO grabs her father and helps him up. They stand there together, hesitating on the threshold of the open door. Lights fade)

THE END

WORKS CITED

- Augustine, Norman R., et al. "Rising Above the Gathering Storm, Revisited." *National Academies Press* (2010): 1-102. Accessed March 22, 2015. http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12999.
- Bada, Jeffery L., et al. "A Search for Endogenous Amino Acids in Martian Meteorite ALH84001," *Science* Vol. 279 no. 5349 (January 16, 1998): 362-365. Accessed March 18, 2015. <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/279/5349/362>.
- Baronsky, Anthony D. *Dodging Extinction*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2014. print
- Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species*, Seattle, WA: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2010. print
- Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*, New York: Random House, 1994. print
- Jenkin, Matthew. "Working with dinosaurs: the secret life of a paleontologist." *The Guardian*, (April 22, 2014). Accessed March 22, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/careers/dream-job-working-dinosaurs-paleontologist>.
- Jenkins, Kevin. "Bundy: Showdown with feds a spiritual battle." *The Spectrum* (August 12, 2014). Accessed February 27, 2015. <http://www.thespectrum.com/story/news/local/2014/08/02/bundy-showdown-feds-spiritual-battle/13536097/>.
- Joseph, Claudia. "Now Scientists Create Sheep That's 15 % Human", *The Daily Mail* (March 27, 2007). Accessed March 22, 2015. <http://www.mailonsunday.co.uk/news/article-444436/Now-scientists-create-sheep-thats-15-human.html>.
- Medrano, Kastalia. "Cloned Horses Coming to the Olympics?" *National Geographic.com* (August 05, 2012). Accessed March 22, 2015. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/08/120808-cloned-horses-clones-science-london-olympics-2012-equestrian/>.
- Mitchell, Margaret. *Gone With the Wind*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008. 49. print
- Murnaghan, Ian. "Stem Cell and Cybrid Controversy." *Explore Stem Cells*, (August 27, 2012). Accessed March 22, 2015. <http://www.explorestemcells.co.uk/stem-cell-cybrid-controversy.html>.
- Radnovitch, Connor. "Bobby Jindal Says Rebellion Brewing Against Washington", *Huffington Post* (June 23, 2014). Accessed March 22, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/22/bobby-jindal_n_5519158.html.

Runyon, Luke. "Women's Work is Never Done On The Farm, And Sometimes Never Counted," NPR, (December 11, 2014). Accessed February 2015. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thesalt/2014/12/11/369902748/womens-work-is-never-done-on-the-farm-and-sometimes-never-counted>.

Wade, C. M., et al. "Genome Sequence, Comparative Analysis, and Population Genetics of the Domestic Horse". *Science*, (November 6, 2009). Accessed March 22, 2015. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19892987>.

Wilder, Thornton. *Our Town*, New York: Coward-McCann, 1965. print

Valdez, Diego. "Rhetorica Christiana" *Getty Research Institute* (2009). Accessed March 22, 2015. <https://archive.org/details/rhetoricachristi00vala>.

Zanjani, Esmail D. et al. "Homing of Human Cells in the Fetal Sheep Model: Modulation by Antibodies Activating or Inhibiting Very Late Activation Antigen-4-Dependent Function". *Blood*: 94 (October 1, 1999). Accessed March 22, 2015. <http://www.bloodjournal.org/content/94/7/2515?sso-checked=true>.

VITA

Margaret A. Shelby was born on May 1, 1956, in Des Moines, Iowa. Her father worked as an attorney for the government in a role which required the family to move a great deal. She was educated in public schools in Columbus, Ohio, Ft. Worth, Texas, Rockville, Maryland, and West Des Moines, Iowa, where she completed high school at Valley High. She briefly attended Drake University in Des Moines, then pursued a career in theatre, primarily as an actor. She worked professionally in the Des Moines area, then moved to Kansas City in 1985 and worked in theatre until 1992. Shelby also worked in arts administration during this time, most significantly as the Marketing Manager for the Coterie Theatre. She enrolled in The Kansas City Art Institute painting program in 1993 and received her B.F.A. degree from that institution in 1996. She went on to work for KCAI from 1997 to 2000. She left the Art Institute to pursue her studio career and worked part time for the Kansas City Artists Coalition. After the attacks of 9/11, funding for her position evaporated, and she began working at area stables, taking care of horses and property for various local facilities. During this time she also continued to work as a studio artist, exhibited, taught private art lessons, was an art instructor for KC Learn, a Home School Network, received several private commissions and was the recipient of a 2010 Inspiration Grant from the ArtsKC Fund, and the 2012 Charlotte Street Foundation's City Center Square Award. She enrolled in the Fine Art program at UMKC in 2011 where she was a replacement instructor for 3-D Design, and Gallery Assistant. After taking a class in text analysis she enrolled in a playwriting course. She was cast in two short works produced by Frank Higgins, and presented by the playwriting class for a showcase, *Intensity 2.0*. She was directed by Kathleen Warfel and

Tony Bernal. This experience was very rewarding and encouraged her to consider adding a second degree to the studio work. She was accepted into the Theatre Department as a Master's Degree candidate. While pursuing both degrees she has continued to work part time at a local stable while teaching one section of Theatre 130, Foundations of Fine Art Theatre, for four semesters. She is the recipient of the Gretel Sigmund Scholarship for 2014, a writer for UMKC Theatre Department's Training News, served as dramaturg for productions of *Almost, Maine* and *Private Eyes*, and presented her paper "A Reasonable Defense" at the 2014 Interdisciplinary Symposium held at UMKC. In addition, she has appeared in the UMKC undergraduate productions of *Playboy of the Western World*, directed by Tom Mardikes, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Scott Stackhouse, and most recently, *The Rocky Horror Show*, directed by Steven Eubank. Shelby was also invited to be in the Kansas City Repertory Theatre's 2014 production of *Our Town*, directed by David Cromer. Shelby will exhibit her final thesis work for her Master's in Fine Art on May 1st of 2015 at the Plum Gallery in the Crossroads. She will appear in a new play written by UMKC alum Alli Jordan as well as co-produce her own short play, *The Lash*, for the 2015 Kansas City Fringe Festival.